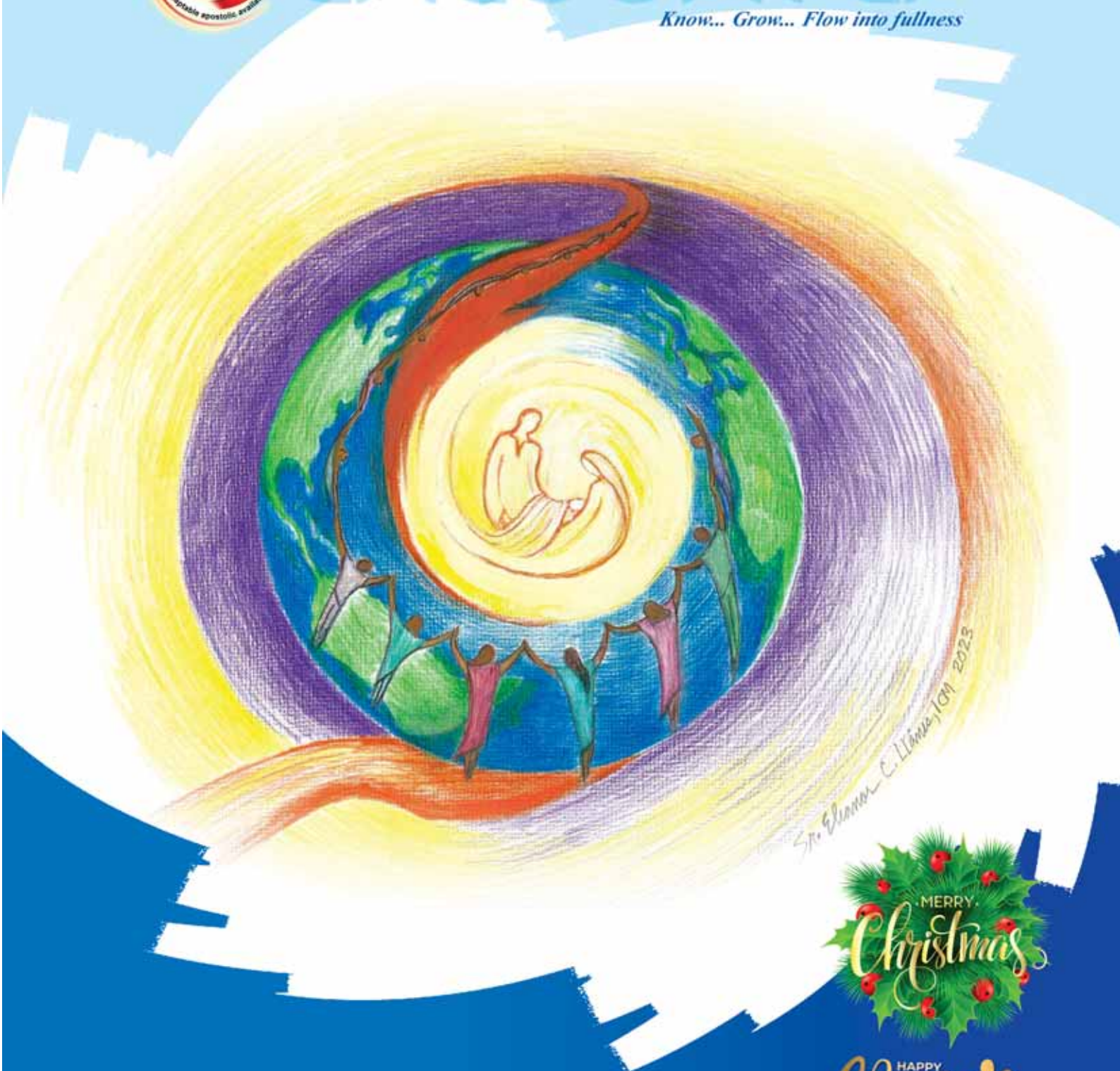




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THE ENCOUNTER

Know... Grow... Flow into fullness



*"The Word became flesh,
And He pitched His tent among us"*

HAPPY
New Year
2024

CONGREGATION OF JESUS MARY JOSEPH



Casa Generalizia
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By now, everyone is connected with the word ‘Synodality’. Pope Francis spoke at the beginning of the *Synod on Synodality*, stressing on the centrality of listening to the Holy Spirit. The Synod “is intended to inspire people to dream about the Church we are called to be, to make people’s hopes flourish, to stimulate trust, to bind up wounds, to weave new and deeper relationships, to learn from one another, to build bridges, to enlighten minds, warm hearts, and restore strength to our hands for our common mission.”

In a few months from now, we are going to have the General Chapter 2024, and therefore it is appropriate to ruminate Jesus’ mission statement given in the synagogue at Nazareth: “*The Spirit of the Lord is on me...to bring Good new to the poor, liberty to the captives and to the blind new sight, to set the oppressed free.*” (Luke 4:18) Moved by the same Spirit, our Founder set out to liberate the Dutch clandestine Church.

Through our Chapter mandates, once again we affirm the presence of the Spirit among us, calling us to work hard with zeal and passion like our Founder Fr. Wolff, to liberate the oppressed where they are found, to unite people where they are separated, to heal them where they are wounded. We want to work collaboratively to save the world from devastation, witnessing to a faith that promotes reconciliation based on justice. We want to bring new hope to our world, to envisage new roads and to walk these roads together in communion. Thus, the outcome of the *Synod on Synodality* and our Chapter with its theme: *Synodal Solidarity towards Universal Fraternity* is not an end in itself but a new beginning with a hopeful future of a new earth and a new heaven.

This is the last issue of ‘**The Encounter**’, in the current chapter period. In this issue, we present General Chapter message from the superior general and inspiring stories coming from the provincial and regional chapters. Under *Youth Echoes* and *Wisdom’s Whispers*, our sisters have shared their lived-in experiences of faith and conviction to follow the Lord. In *Myriads of Mission*, you will read an interesting information on the history of the name of our Congregation and new insights on renewal of religious life dating back to 1968 General Chapter. Further, you will be enthused to be a missionary appraising through the articles from America. Finally, the articles from mission and JPIC express how our sisters are engaged in these initiatives.

One of the incredible experiences I had as General Councillor is from working for *The Encounter*. I am greatly indebted to the General and Provincial / Regional Council teams for their cooperation and support in this endeavour. In particular, I wish to thank Sr. Mary Karickakunnel and Sr. Christina Manickam for their extraordinary editing skills and availability in this effort. Working together with the Encounter team from the Provinces and Region namely, Sr. Arogya Mary Mallavarapu, Sr. Mercy George, Sr. Showri Tresa Thuraka, Sr. Sushila Kerketta and Sr. Regina Zangiti was indeed an amazing experience. I am grateful to every sister whose articles have been archived in all the issues of the Encounter. I owe a great deal of gratitude to Mr. Gopi Viswanadhapalli, for his astounding graphic and designing skills. His commitment to complete the work on time is truly commendable. *Kudos* to every one!

Finally, I want to say “*Thanks Be to God!*”

Vijaya M. Udumala JMJ



GENERAL CHAPTER MESSAGE

Theme:
**Synodal Solidarity towards
Universal Fraternity**



Sr. INNAMMA YERUVA
Superior General

The chapter theme for Provincial, Regional and General Chapters has been evolved from the profound reflections on the theme of the Synod of Bishops: “*For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission*” and the Encyclical of Pope Francis - “*Fratelli Tutti*” on *fraternity and social friendship*, as well as from the genuine aspirations and collective reflections of every member of the Congregation. During the Local Chapter and subsequent Provincial and Regional Chapters, we walked together on the path of synodality, listening to one another and sharing our concerns on our JMJ life and mission.

We are now at the threshold of another significant event of our Congregation – The General Chapter 2024. Obviously, General Chapter is a privileged moment in the history of our Congregation, and we are moved by the Spirit, and sent forth to revitalise the spirituality of the Congregation, and interpret its Charism according to the signs of the times. Apparently, it is a time to celebrate what God has been doing among us, and a time to embrace the calls of the present and the future.

In connection with our General Chapter, I am glad to share some of my reflections on the Chapter theme also from listening to what the recent Synod has say to us.

Our lives should have the flavour of the Gospel: On October 3, 2020, the eve of the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, Pope Francis signed the encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* at the saint’s tomb. The title of this encyclical comes from the words of St. Francis and means “brothers all.” With these words, the Pope says, “*Saint Francis of Assisi addressed his brothers and sisters and proposed to them a way of life marked by the flavour of the Gospel*” (FT 1)¹. The document is a reflection on human fraternity and social friendship as the antidote for the societal problems of this world.

In this context, *Fratelli Tutti* is the work of the Holy Father reading the signs of the times and, assisted by the Holy Spirit, proposing solutions to our Socio-economic and psycho-spiritual problems inviting all the people of God to commit themselves to respond to the cry of humanity and the earth. This encyclical is an invitation to our Congregation to “*dream together*” of a world firmly grounded on the dignity of all persons.

Developing a Spirituality for Synodality: Synodality is a way to express who we are as Christians and who we are becoming together as Church through the work of the Holy Spirit.² For all of us, synodality entails

¹ Pope Francis, Encyclical “*Fratelli Tutti*” (03 October 2020), # 1

² International Theological Commission (ITC), Synodality in the life and mission of the Church, (2018) # 42, 43

a process of conversion: a discovery of the way in which the Spirit is active in the life of every community, inviting us to new ways of understanding and interaction beyond those of our normal social, political, religious and ecclesial habits. Synodality asks us to seek the grace and courage to make the Church an authentic community of love, with an openness to accept the other, a willingness to serve rather than rule, and a desire to follow Christ, adhering to His truth, not only for our own salvation but as hope of all people, especially those forgotten, oppressed, and exploited, those *‘excluded from the banquet of life.’* Synodality asks us to fall in love with the Church again and to love her as Christ does.³

Our spirituality is grounded in the conviction that God is active in our world. The spiritual path laid out by Fr. Wolff helps us discern God’s presence, to find God in all things, reaching out to a diverse, and grace filled yet imperfect world. The spirituality for synodality gives us an amazing discovery of our hidden energies of love, commitment, generosity and brings us into the wider human context as we strive for social justice, peace and integrity of creation.⁴

Consecrated life - called to walk in Synodality: Cardinal João Braz de Aviz Prefect and Secretary of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CICLSAL), called upon all the consecrated to actively participate in the ecclesial journey of the Synod. *“Synodality is a journey that challenges every community in its being a visible expression of a communion of love, a reflection of the Trinitarian relationship, of its goodness and its beauty, capable of arousing new energies to confront ourselves concretely with the present moment.”*⁵

Synodality begins within us: from a change of mentality, from a personal conversion, in the community, in the choice of our apostolic priorities, to move from the centre to the peripheries, to where people are living in misery. Synodality has shaped our local, regional and provincial chapter assemblies in participation, communion and mission. The theme of our General Chapter certainly demands us to generate an atmosphere of openness and to walk together, to deepen relationships, to facilitate authentic listening, dialogue and discernment using the methods of *‘Conversation in the Spirit’* proposed by the Holy See, which was used effectively during the recent Synod on Synodality.

Forming Ourselves in Synodality: Synodality entails receptivity to formation, and ongoing formation. How does our Congregation and the Church community form people to be more capable of *‘walking together,’* listening to one another, participating in mission and engaging in dialogue? What is offered to foster formation of the young in a synodal way?⁶

Openness to the possibility of transformation, begins in the context of relationships. We find ourselves more receptive to change, personally and institutionally, if we first have genuinely and humbly listen to the experience of others. We must, as Pope Francis encourages us, *“remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other”* in the *“art of accompaniment”* This will be occasioned by a patient discernment marked by a desire to accompany, to listen, to know, to love and to give our lives over to Christ. Forming ourselves in synodality

³ Synod on Synodality, <https://www.synod.va/en/highlights/towards-a-spirituality-for-synodality.html>

⁴ cf Laetitia Aarnink & Louise van Laarhoven, Sent by the Lord, The Spirituality of the Sisters of Jesus Mary Joseph

⁵ Cardinal João Braz de Aviz, Consecrated life: called to walk in synodality

⁶ Pope Francis, Encyclical *“Evangelii Gaudium”* # 169

will equip us to better face the challenges of our time, to respond to the Spirit's promptings in our hearts, and to live out this essential mission of the Church.

We are the Agents of the Mission of Jesus: Jesus is our Model in our mission of mercy and His mission as that of being the Kingdom of God. Most importantly, it is His mission we are commissioned to carry on to the end of the earth (Math 28:19). As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (John 20:21)'.

Fr. Wolff views the spirituality of his congregation as: *'The Spirit who moves us is the same Spirit who moved Jesus'.* Moved by the Spirit, Jesus went from city to city to bring good news to the poor. So moved by the same Spirit we are being sent on mission of Jesus. Therefore, the distinct characteristic of a sister of the Congregation of JMJ is to live up to this charism with unshakable trust in God and with a burning zeal for Christ's redemptive mission in today's world. The apostolic zeal of the Founder imbedded in every JMJ sister, is an irresistible inner urge to share with all human beings the love of God, ... with a preferential option for the deprived, disadvantaged and dispossessed. The ultimate purpose of our mission today is the same as it has been since the time of our Founder, "to proclaim the Kingdom of God's love"⁷

JMJ Spirituality and Charism adapted and revitalised through the Years: From our history, it is clear how time and again our Congregation adapted itself with the changing circumstances, while at the same time living faithfully the spirituality and charism of the Congregation. It is amazing to discover that this all-pervading spirit of Solidarity and Fraternity were embedded in the witnessing life of JMJ Sisters during the last two centuries, echoing this heritage as our spiritual inheritance. The spirit of Synodality and Solidarity towards the poor and under privileged were upheld from the inception of the Congregation of JMJ.

We read in our Constitutions: "God has a special place for the poor, so much so that he himself became poor. In discovering God in the poor we are also inspired by them and live "the ethic of enough". Through our ministries we reach out to the poor and the marginalized, and in all apostolic choices, we are guided by the principle of preferential option for the poor.⁸ The first General Chapter (2018) emphasized on living in spirit of solidarity supporting projects for economic justice and unite to confront unjust systems, using all available resources effectively to create new pathways for mission.⁹

Conclusion: It was the task of the General Chapters to study and reflect the Charism, adapting it in relation to the signs of the times and emerging needs of people in line with the initiatives towards Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation. The option for the poor is an essential dimension in all our General Chapters over the years. The *Synod on Synodality* as well as *Fratelli Tutti* express that the spirit of synodality and solidarity are essential elements for us today, to share in the mission of Christ. I hope that the Chapter theme – '*Synodal Solidarity towards Universal Fraternity*' finds expression in the life and mission of every sister of the Congregation, in our community life, in our apostolic choices and services. Being sensitive to the pressing needs of our times, let us pray and challenge ourselves to engage in ventures that alleviate human misery by reaching out to the people in the peripheries.

On this significant mile stone in the history of our Congregation, we shall honour the inspiring life lived by our founder, and implore his intercession to proclaim the goodness of justice and peace by our own joyful missionary commitment.

⁷ cf Constitutions of the Congregation of Jesus Mary Joseph, # 1

⁸ cf Constitutions of the Congregation of Jesus Mary Joseph, # 56

⁹ Congregation of JMJ First General Chapter 2018 Direction Statement

THE SYNODALITY DREAMED BY GOD FOR THE CHURCH AND CONSECRATED LIFE IN THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

The General Governments of the UISG and the USG - in their discernment on the Synodality dreamed by God for the Church and Consecrated Life of the third millennium have offered important contributions to a theology and spirituality of synodality. Some of the responses speak directly of the synodality dreamed by God, others of the synodality dreamed by our Institutes, with the conviction that God's dream can be detected in our dreams.



1. Biblical basis for the synodality dreamed of by God

The responses of the General Governments to the question of the synodality that God desires for the Church and consecrated life in the third millennium point to several texts of Sacred Scripture that support it:

- the experience of the Exodus, as liberation from Egypt and the way to the promised land,
- the request of Jesus that all may be one (Jn 17:21-23),
- the example of the Master who went about doing good and healing all (Acts 10:37-38),
- the principal command of the Covenant to love with all your heart, soul and strength (Mk 12:30),
- the proclamation of the Beatitudes (Mt 5,3-12),
- Jesus' question about who his family is (Lk 11,27-28),
- the desire of the Good Shepherd that all be gathered into one flock (Jn 10,16),
- or God's plan for a Church with a diversity of charisms and ministries, but forming one Body, the Body of Christ, always animated by the Holy Spirit (chapters 12 and 13 of 1 Corinthians).
- Jesus' dream of synodality is expressed in his proclamation of the Beatitudes when he longs for a land of all and for all, in justice, dignity, respect, peace and love and in his teaching of our responsibility for this to happen (Mt 5:1-12; Lk 6:17-26).

2. Synodality, God's dream for the Church today

- Now is the time of God's dream for the Church. Relationships are the key. Now is the time to build bridges. God's dream is a global and synodal Church that lives unity in diversity. God is preparing something new, and we must collaborate.
- We are called to move forward together as disciples of the way, who offer a radical witness and have a heart without exclusion.
- We are a synodal church when everyone in the church - without distinction - has a voice and is heard; when we work together to make the world one family in our common home; when we are a simple, fraternal/brotherly, pilgrim, open church, attentive to the signs of the times, welcoming diversity and defending the dignity and equality of all; when the different churches listen to each other and walk together on the pilgrimage of life.

3. Synodality: God dream for Consecrated Life today

God's dream of synodality in consecrated life emerges when:

We all walk together in the same direction and with the same purpose, without dis-regarding the richness of our charism.

We believe that our institutes continue to exist because that is the will of God, who wishes to act in humanity and in the Church through our charism and ministries.

We are like the Good Samaritan, who does not abandon the weak and needy he encounters on life's journey and strives for an inclusive (intergenerational, interreligious, intercultural, human-diverse) society.

4. We believe that our dream of the Church is also God's dream

Consecrated life hopes that the Second Vatican Council will continue to transform the whole Church from the perspective of communion and participation and that the magisterium of Pope Francis of a Church poor and for the poor will become more and more a reality.

We dream of a Church going out, taking new paths of communion with the world: living from below, inclusive, bold, compassionate, open to participation, a table for all; a missionary Church that reaches out to the ends of the earth and to the geo-graphical and existential peripheries.

We dream of a Church of equal participation: where all the baptised feel that we are brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ; where we are in solidarity and merciful towards one another.

We dream of a Church that is more open to dialogue, to participation: especially of women and in which all the laity- increasingly responsible and occupy their rightful place. And we also dream of a clergy who are humble, poor and who recognise themselves as the Gospel says as unprofitable servants (Lk 17:10).

We dream of a Church of collaborative and communal discernment: where the most important issues are resolved in consultation with the greatest number of people involved and where those who are different, those who denounce and proclaim are listened to.

We dream of a Church of participation and communion: sharing bread, welcoming immigrants, and native peoples, committed to the visible participation of women and the formation of all lay people, and involved in the defence of life; a Church in which we walk listening to the steps of others; and open to other cultures; a Church that engages in a journey of healing (eg.in relation to survivors of abuse).

5. We believe that our dream of consecrated life is also God's dream

We feel called to live synodality, walking together, recognising the dignity of the other, listening to their stories, their ideas, their desires, thanking God for such gifts.

Synodality leads us not to give importance to titles or positions, but to give more importance to direct and transparent relationships, based on the value of the person.

The spirit of synodality unites us to the threefold cry of Jesus: at Lazarus, when relationships die; at Jerusalem, when division continues to threaten; in Gethsemane, when we experience abandonment and loneliness.

Consecrated life dreams of being part of a more inclusive church: with the responsible participation of women, and families.





6. Features of a synodal church - and of the consecrated life in it

The synodal Church is a Church going out, which always has its doors open not only to go out, but also to welcome the small and vulnerable, the neediest, everyone.

It is an innovative church, networked with other social actors, striving for a more humane world in terms of the Kingdom of God proclaimed by Jesus.

It is a Church in collaborative discernment because whoever does not connect with others will not find the true path.

It is a Church without clericalism, where all together welcome the leaders that the Spirit raises up, especially among young people and women.

The synodal Church looks at reality with the eyes of God and is constituted on the basis of the common vocation of all the faithful: to be children of God and brothers and sisters to one another: The Church of Jesus is the People of God and not the people of God's clerics.

The Church of a new paradigm, not pyramidal but circular and horizontal: participatory, witnessing, compassionate, inclusive, unified, transforming Church; listening Church, Church of the people.

The Church of hope and dream for respectful leaders who, by the example of their lives, give true witness to the Gospel of Christ.

The Church in transformation through listening, tolerance, inter-religious collaboration, inclusion and communion.

Ecclesial synodality asks us all to live in sisterhood and brotherhood, renouncing self-referentiality. This dream of synodality requires a conversion to the Holy Spirit, a Church guided by the Spirit and walking with the Spirit.

We are aware that there is still a long way to go to live and proclaim the joy of the Gospel, to achieve universal brotherhood and sisterhood lived in right relationship and responsive to the call of integral ecology.

Reference:

[https://www.uisg.org/files/allegatodocumento/UISG USG Synod Contribution.pdf](https://www.uisg.org/files/allegatodocumento/UISG%20Synod%20Contribution.pdf)

Together on the Way



Our Provincial Chapter A Spiritual Journey

*“Jesus went up on a mountainside
by Himself to pray.
Later that night, He was there alone.”
Mt.14:23.*

Sr. AROGYA MARY
Sr. SANTHOSH
Sr. AMULYA



Profound prayer experience and interior silence were the foundational groundwork of each delegate through the two-day seminar on discernment followed by a day of recollection. Inspired by our Charism, the theme for the Provincial Chapter 2023 is chosen as *“Synodal Solidarity towards Universal Fraternity”* in other words love for Christ and love for Humanity.

The official opening of the Provincial Chapter of Bangalore Province commenced on 2nd October 2023 with a Holy Eucharist celebrated by Rev. Dr. Peter Machado, the Archbishop of Bangalore followed by the inauguration of the Chapter. It was held in 2 phases, one in October and the other in November 2023 and was successfully completed with strategic action plan that will guide our lives and mission in the next six years. As one family the delegates played the chords of gratitude to God the Almighty for His accompanying presence throughout our Chapter journey and implored His blessings to live the Chapter moments gratefully in the realities of our lives and mission.

Glancing through these 14 days, was like an “Upper Room” experience to us. The daily inspirational inputs were focused on awareness of one’s inner moments, listening to the Spirit and discernment of the spirits. Every day we asked for a special grace “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me” (Ps 51:10). We prayed with this line asking for an attentive listening heart. Chapter guide Fr. Joseph Lobo SJ. highlighted on a *four-fold listening- to our body, to our mind, to our heart and to our spirit*. This awareness helped us to interiorly attune ourselves with the divine.

The delegates with single focus on province’s hopes and aspirations, the joys and struggles, were led by the Holy Spirit to reflect deeply that: ‘I am the province; the province is as big as or as small as I am’. The quality of the province depends on the quality of my life and the quality of my apostolic commitment. It is my responsibility to build up or ruin it. The delegates are convinced that they are chosen and sent on a mission. Being a member of the Provincial Chapter is indeed a sacred mission.

Fr. Joseph Lobo SJ, the chapter guide’s inspirational talks on the theme were a pointer to the future with its own challenges in our wounded world. As we began to reflect on the theme of the Chapter, we understood the deeper realities of our world. It is with a spirit of Synodal Solidarity we become promoters of Universal Fraternity as missionaries of hope and joy. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Sr. Anthony Mary Dasari, the president of the Chapter, has connected the members with the spirit of the Founder quoting Fr. Wolff’s sayings and with Word of God every day.



ECHOES from Provincial and Regional Chapters

As we listened to the reports of different apostolates (the storylines), constantly asking ourselves, how have these activities affected us – in our spirituality, relationships, commitment? How have they affected the people whom we serve towards their transformation (the deep story). What are our attachments, wrong choices, rational justifications, fears and anxieties that make us deviate from the goal of our life and mission? What are the weeds that we have allowed to grow in our life all these years? How do they affect my life and mission?

With this in mind we drew the actions plan for six years. In *Evangelii Gaudium* ('Joy of the Gospel') Pope Francis says, "I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from the clinging to its own security". In many instances throughout the Bible, we see that God uses weak individuals to build kingdom of God. And we have realised that a Provincial Chapter is nothing but looking at the Province through the eyes of Christ and understand the Province with the mind of Christ and love the Province with the heart of Christ and deal the Province with the power of Christ, and serve the Province with the compassion of Christ.

Sr. Amulya, the delegate from the TPS shares her experience: As a TPS, I was privileged to journey with my fellow chapter members in synodal solidarity. The inner moments in our hearts helped us

to praise God with gratitude for the past, to live the present with passion for Jesus, and rejuvenate a hopeful future with the Holy Spirit. Chapter was a sacred time, to refresh, renew and revitalize ourselves as a group to respond to the call of God to listen to the cry of the poor and cry of the earth.

I felt throughout the days of the Chapter we, the delegates experienced God's guiding hands. Active participation and sharing in the small groups as well as in the general sessions made the Provincial Chapter a great success. The policies arrived at the Chapter intends to help the members of the Province to live our consecrated life more meaningfully and to bring about a renewal. We, the daughters of Rev. Fr. Mathias Wolff are called to manifest his spirit and charism in our life and mission.

We are grateful for God's abundance of graces and blessings on us. Let us build Christ centred Communities, responding to the compassionate love of the Father as we step forward towards our mission in serving the humanity.

May the Lord who enlivened the delegates with the fire of His Spirit, continue to direct each one in the days to come. May the Spirit of God continue to help us to renew our lives with vitality and passion to pass on the torch of love handed onto us to the future generation with Synodal Solidarity towards Universal Fraternity.



Chapter: A Symphony of Unity in Diversity

“Do not wait for a golden opportunity to do something, search and find the gold that is hidden in the opportunity you have been given right now”



Sr. ROSE MARY THUMMA
Karuna Nivas, Bhilai.

It has been a blessing to me being a delegate of Raipur Province's Provincial Chapter, 2023. To me Provincial Chapter has been a celebration of an entire JMJ Congregation and Province.

From the day of commencement of the Local Chapter every member of the community participated actively and responsibly in the Chapter proceedings considering it a holy task. The evaluation of mission and life brought renewal and spiritual growth. Various presentations and sharing in the proceedings of the Chapter were a touching experience and an expression of gratitude for the marvellous work that the Lord has done and is doing through our Congregation.

Delegates representing various ministries, institutions and culture brought in a wealth of knowledge to the Chapter. In spite of human limitations, cultural and language barriers, celebration of unity found a place at various moments during the Chapter.

The prayerful support of the sisters from entire Congregation was the foundation of strength for the delegates. The movement of the Spirit was experienced powerfully and it was the Holy Spirit who guided the sacred work of the Chapter making it clearer each time.

Being my first, it was an extraordinary experience to learn, to be open, to understand, to discover and embrace the sacredness of the moment. I learnt to let

go off my small corner of the world and opened myself to the reality of the wider context of our Province and Congregation. As a trusted delegate, I was convinced that selfless, open, free, and authentic participation was my call of the moment, no matter how small my contribution might be.

During those days of Chapter, I was able to have wider vision of who we are as a Cong. of JMJ in different parts of the world and how we respond to the needs of the Church and the world keeping our Charism alive and relevant for each moment of history. Each time I learnt more of who we are and what we stand for as a Congregation, I experienced the richness and challenges of international Congregation in a deeper way. These experiences have enriched me to open my eyes, mind and heart widely and live my daily life with passion and love for our Congregation.

When confrontations and human weaknesses gave way to unpleasant and difficult discussions, I experienced the mercy of the Lord bearing the fruits in the group through the help of our Chapter observers, Chapter guide and the delegates. Election of delegates to the General Chapter in such solemn atmosphere is another profound time of listening to the Spirit that I cherish.

As I conclude, I wish an assured prayerful support to all the delegates of the General Chapter as you reflect the theme '*Synodal Solidarity in Universal Fraternity*' to envision the future of our Congregation.

Synodal Solidarity Towards Universal Fraternity



Sr. JOSEPH MARY KATA
Hyderabad Province

Filled with gratitude towards the Almighty God and the Congregation, envisioned by our Charism, I am delighted to express my inner whisperings with renewed commitment as a Chapter delegate in the Province of Hyderabad.

The Chapter was a devotional spiritual journey led by the Holy Spirit under the guidance of Fr. Sebast. L. Raj, our chapter guide with a theme of current scenario “*Synodal Solidarity Towards Universal Fraternity*.” Journeying together towards a common goal is to encounter people at the peripheries through our challenging ministries in favor of the poor.

On the one hand we are happy that we are launching out to the poor people at the margins through our innovative ministries according to the signs of the times. And on the other hand, we need to renew our commitment and face the crisis of vocation through our inspiring way of life and being relevant in our choice of ministries.

It is praiseworthy to note that we as the Congregation play a vital role in the Synodal Church through our participation, communion, and mission, in particular in our community living, and our ministries through synodal solidarity based on the spirituality and charism of our Founder Rev. Fr. Mathias Wolff SJ and our pioneer sisters.

Exercising the Synodality in our local communities, enables the members to take active participation in spiritual life, community life, and ministries. The Chapter deliberations and outcomes placed on the members a greater responsibility to re-commit ourselves as radical followers of Christ, carrying forward His mission of mercy and compassion among the most vulnerable people among us. The remarkable love of the pioneering sisters for the Congregation, their unshakable trust in God and their untiring services in the mission are the signboards for the younger generation to follow their ideals of commitment with renewed zeal and passion for the service of the Kingdom.

Synodality imprinted in my heart and mind, moves me forward with a universal mind, to reach out to the people bringing about a universal fraternity. The theme of our chapter is aptly chosen and appropriate to the current and situational happenings in the Church as we revitalize our own spirituality. I realized that I need to listen to others realizing that Holy Spirit can speak through everyone in order to respond to the cry of the poor and cry of the earth. I affirmed to myself to sincerely live out the Gospel of Christ relevant to the current mission.

The plan of actions as the outcomes of the Chapter with regard to the community life, spiritual life, governance and ministries are indeed practical and feasible to implement them in our lives and mission. I take pride in being a JMJ, to carry the four corners of the world in my heart, ready for any mission, anywhere and with anyone as a committed religious till the end of my life. I wish that let my life be an inspiration to many young and old in the Congregation and the world at large. I am thankful to God for giving me this wonderful chance of being the Chapter delegate.



Lived in Experience of the Province Chapter 2023



Sr. MARIA SHYMALA ERRY

At the outset, I appreciate the dynamic vision of our Congregational leaders for choosing a contextualized theme for our Chapters. The theme set out all the members of the Congregation on a spiritual spiral journey interconnecting the Local Chapter with Province Chapter 2023 and taking forward this momentum to the General Chapter 2024. The Chapter season comes with a clarion call to each one of us to reflect on the theme, “*Synodal solidarity towards universal fraternity*”.

Obviously, the Chapter is a significant spiritual movement in the Congregation that calls on every member to be open to the working of the Holy Spirit at this moment in our history. It is a sacred and grace-filled time to deepen the unity and the spirit of sisterhood in synodality and solidarity and thus promoting universal fraternity. It is a faith journey, a paschal process that involves theological reflections and contemplative dialogue and common discernment, leading to the unfolding of strategic mission priorities as per the emerging needs of the Church, deepening the Charism of the Congregation.

Our Chapters call us to be the missionaries of synodal solidarity. In other words, we are chosen to be missionaries of a new hope and joy in all that we do in our life and mission. Such a deep conviction with passion for Jesus and his people emerges when we live in communion with the Lord, in synodal solidarity among ourselves and with the people in our mission. For, the Lord is present where two or three live in solidarity. It is the empowering presence of the Lord that strengthens us to actualize synodal solidarity in our mission, establishing universal fraternity.

The primary task of a Chapter is to preserve the spiritual patrimony of the institute; it carries out this general mandate by promoting suitable renewal, electing members by the proper law, treating matters of importance to the institute and reflecting on norms, which bind all the members with JMJ identity. In this process something remains unchanged, that is, the most fundamentals of the founding Charism.

In the preface to the ten-day retreat Fr. Wolff sums up in two pages what he views as the spirituality of his Congregation: ‘*The Spirit who moves us is the same Spirit who moved Jesus*’. At this significant Chapter event, we need to grow in the Spirit of God, so that we can experience the power of the Spirit who moves us to follow the path of Christ, to love God and love our neighbour without counting the cost, following the footprints of the Master.

*May the Lord be the lamp to our footsteps:
may he provide us with light,
inspiration and direction on our
Synodal journey.*

*May the Spirit of God be our catalyst
and compass especially,
when we feel weak and directionless;
may his love be our courage
And may our Holy Patrons
Jesus Mary Joseph intercede for us.*



Moved by the Spirit: We Journeyed Together



Sr. MERCY GEORGE
Guntur Province

We found ourselves filled with great joy as we commenced the long-awaited Provincial Chapter 2023. Fr. Pavul Raj, SJ presented a two-day seminar on discernment on 4th and 5th August 2023. He invigorated the group with practical examples to help us understand the significance of discernment during the Chapter. On the 6th August, the Chapter delegates spent time in prayer and recollection, invoking the Holy Spirit for guidance and wisdom for Chapter deliberations and decisions for the benefit of the Congregation and the Church. The entire ambiance was peaceful and we felt the presence of God amidst us.

On 7th August at 6.45 am the Holy Eucharist has set a right tone for the Provincial Chapter 2023, as His Grace, Rev. Dr. Prakash Mallavarapu, Archbishop of Vishakhapatnam officiated the Holy Mass and energized our souls to be receptive to the silent whispers of God's will and to the movement of the Holy Spirit. The ecclesial event paved the way for the new beginning of a renewed era.

The inauguration of the Provincial Chapter began with a prayer thereafter, Sr. Tresa KVM, the President of the Provincial Chapter, welcomed the delegates, and in her inaugural address, she narrated the '*Emmaus Experience*' of having a free walk with Jesus to build a fraternal world through synodal solidarity. She solemnly declared open the Provincial Chapter 2023, while Sr. Valsa Koreth and Sr. Mary Karickakunnel unveiled the Chapter Logo of the Provincial Chapter 2023: "*Synodal Solidarity towards Universal Fraternity*".

Fr. Francis Xavier SJ, Chapter Guide ignited the members to be alive, and aligned in a new direction for the greater glory of God in the service of His people. He emphasized that we are called to do the Lord's work to the best of our ability. The timely inspirational talks delivered by him enabled our Spirit to move along with the Chapter theme and in line with our Spirituality and Charism.

During the Chapter, the delegates felt that it is a collective spiritual exercise towards '*discerning the Will of God*'. Every deliberation was in the realm of the Spirit and each of us felt that God's presence was amidst us, inviting us to redefine the destiny of the Cong. of JMJ. Moved by the Spirit, the delegates were open to listen to each other and shared honestly their interior intuitions. The outcome of the Provincial Chapter was inspiring and reassuring as we have arrived at concrete decisions and action plans. As Chapter delegates, we experienced the Lord's strength and accompaniment very vividly, that paved the way forward to walk in the Spirit of Synodality and to face with courage the challenges of the world.

We are grateful to our holy patrons Jesus Mary Joseph for the blessings in abundance and our founder Rev. Fr. Mathias Wolff, SJ and Sr. Mary Glowrey, the Servant of God, for their powerful intercessions during the Chapter. We are indebted to all our sisters for their prayerful support for the fruitful completion of this sacred journey.

Regional Chapter 2023 an Experience of the Movement of the Spirit

The Ghana Regional Chapter began with a solemn Eucharistic celebration presided over by Rev. Mathew Kwasi Gyamfi, the Bishop of Sunyani on 22nd October 2023 at JMJ Regional House, Sunyani and ended on the 30th October 2023.

Prior to the Chapter days, the delegates along with Sr. Sundari Singareddy, the president, Fr. Dominic Apee, M. Afr, the Chapter guide, and Sr. Chandra Thainese, the observer from the General Council, spent two days in reflective study, sharing insights, followed by a day of recollection. The document on the evaluation of our life and mission in the past six years helped us to see objectively the richness of our intercultural diversity and a fragile balance we have experienced between our community life and mission. Most of all we experienced the power of the Spirit and the grace of God leading us through these years. The Chapter delegates appreciated the natural, pleasant, calm, and appropriate ambiance during the time of exchange, reflection, and discernment.

Moved by the Spirit, the delegates of the Chapter journeyed together on the path of *Open Minds* to listen intelligently, with *Open Hearts* to be in touch with one's inner moments, and *Open Will* to let go and let the new come in. Every deliberation and decision in the Chapter revolved around what God is asking JMJ Sisters in Ghana, through the universal Church, and focused on finding God's will in the economic, social, political, cultural, and ecclesial realities of our lives. The single voice that echoed predominantly was *'I need to become free within, in order to be free for the mission of Jesus through renewed commitment in my ministry and authentic living of my community life'*

It was encouraging to note that even the youngest in the group was gifted with the power of speaking freely while others were given the gift of respectful listening. The animating power of the Holy Spirit has vibrantly guided the members in planning for spiritual, communitarian, apostolic, formative, administrative, fiscal, and ecological aspects of our mission for the coming six years.

Sr. ROSILY ABRAHAM

JMJ Formation House, Sunyani.



Apprising of norms, that give direction as well as uphold our lives as consecrated women, was done keeping a balance between religious values and humanitarian dimension. Throughout the Chapter, the spirit of convergence was visibly sensed, although the individual differences and uniqueness of ideas were deliberated with respect using the art of spiritual conversation.

The unity, enthusiasm, and commitment of everyone are highly commendable. Making a major part of nights active as in the day, the delegates toiled untiringly, yet joyfully with a view that they have a greater responsibility on their shoulders for the life and mission of the Region in the coming years.

As the Chapter came to a close the pulse of the delegates was on importance of implementing the actions plans with a personal conviction and commitment. We acknowledge that the Regional Chapter 2023 was an experience of the movement of the Spirit, giving our Region direction for the next six years, in line with the theme of synodal solidarity towards universal fraternity.

Unique Experiences as Chapter Delegates



Sr. VIJAYA PRABHAVATHI, U

Sr. PAULINE NUSI

It is a pleasant privilege to share our experience on the significant event of the Provincial Chapter of Hyderabad Province. We are grateful to God for enabling us to be effective participants in the Local and Provincial Chapters.

The Local Chapter held from 2nd February to 30th April 2023 was about 3 months. The Provincial Superior's guidelines, online sessions on '*Fratelli Tutti*' and '*Synodality*' by Fr. Ravi Shekhar Dusi SJ, and reading of the Congregational documents namely *Constitutions, Spirit & Charism* and *Sent by the Lord* put us on right orientation for the Provincial Chapter. The happenings within the Local Chapter like distinct themes for meditation, chapter prayer, weekly special adoration, prayer and keeping a lighted oil Lamp on the Altar enabled our fellow sisters and us to perceive and experience the animating presence of the Holy Spirit.

The Chapter theme '*Synodal Solidarity towards Universal Fraternity*' was superbly coined with both dimensions, the foundational Spirituality and Charism of the Founder and the spirit of the Universal Church. We could tangibly feel the abiding and strengthening presence of God leading us all through various deliberations and decisions taken. The celestial support of our Founder and all our sisters who had gone before us have enabled us to have a focused vision in support of the theme, throughout the proceedings of the Chapter.

The Provincial Chapter consisted of two phases (Phase I: 21-24 August 2023 and Phase II: 10-14 October 2023). All the delegates felt privileged to be the members of the Provincial Chapter 2023, that

demanding us to be worthy delegates. By studying the reports of the province and different apostolates, we were put into the right spirit to participate in the Chapter. Fr. Rex Angelo SJ., through his insightful session enabled us to be thankful and appreciate the glorious past of JMJ and the rich spirituality and heritage of the Congregation. This facilitated us to attain the right disposition for reflective discernment and internal preparation for participation in the Provincial Chapter.

During the first phase the delegates studied and deliberated on the province reports, postulates, and the survey reports of the Chapter Guide and brought out the possible action plans. At the second phase, the delegates focused on the postulates to be recommended to General Chapter 2024, deliberation on the proposed amendments to the Constitutions, and the edition of Norms. In this phase the election of the delegates for the General Chapter was done and the tentative dates for the post-chapter was planned.

The period of the Chapter through the discussions, deliberations, liturgies and prayers enabled every delegate to deepen our call to the relevance of our Founder's visionary Charism and Spirituality in the complex reality of the future. It created an enthusiasm to give our best in carrying out the mission of Christ with renewed and revitalized commitment.

Overall, it was a time to flip the pages of the past to discover the strengths and shadows of our lives as JMJ sisters and our mission that needed to be reviewed, and transformed. All the members were attuned to the voice of the Spirit, felt re-connected with the entire Province and the Congregation. We

ECHOES from Provincial and Regional Chapters

thank God for the dynamic presence of the Holy Spirit and the prayerful support of all our sisters in the province.

Each day brought its own blessings, inspiration, enlightenment and awareness of our responsibility as Chapter delegates. The Chapter Guide, Fr. Sebastia L Raj SJ., in perfect coordination with our Provincial, Sr. Mukta Xess, and the Chapter committees, brought the Chapter to a fruitful conclusion. God was in great control of us in every interaction and decision-making. We are grateful for God's abundant graces and blessings on us.

We are indeed indebted to God our Father, for guiding and empowering us with the gifts of the Spirit. Our sincere thanks to our Congregation's Leadership Team for their untiring and meticulous plan of execution of the Chapters at both Local as well as Province level. We are ever grateful to Fr. Sebastia L Raj SJ, the Chapter Guide for the systematic, reflective and practical assistance during the Chapter. Heartfelt thanks to Srs. Valsa Koreth and Chandra Thainese, the Observers from the General Council for their insightful suggestions. Our appreciation and gratitude to Sr. Mukta Xess Provincial Superior and the Council for their skillful conduct and successful accomplishment of the Provincial Chapter.

Rose – Bud – Thorn Conversation Starter



Here is a way - to keep our connections strong, conversations inspiring and reflections flowing ...

1. What's your ROSE? Something you're grateful for, or that's positive in your life right now?
2. What's your THORN? Something challenging or stressful, that you could use some more support with right now?
3. What's your BUD? Something you are looking forward to that gives you hope, motivation, and inspiration right now?

Source: Erica Parkerson,

<https://www.spirit.com/rose-bud-thorn-conversation-starter/>

Celebration of the Solemn Moments - Chapter 2023



Sr. BIKASHLATA BARLA
Mathias Convent, Ranchi

"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" - Phil.4:13

Chapter: A profound memory to relish

I feel happy and privileged for being a delegate at the Raipur Province Provincial Chapter, 2023. Being a delegate for the first time, I relish a profound memory and awesome learning experience. The Chapter was a time of grace to all, an experience of thankfulness, celebration, sacredness and solemn moment.

The meaningful liturgical services led us to enter into the Provincial Chapter with vigour, tremendous positive energy and experiencing the intense presence of God. The Chapter was a gathering centred around faith, open to a process of discernment where the Spirit lead us. It expanded my thinking and I learned to accept and appreciate diverse opinions. The grace that filled my heart resonated with the Chapter's theme: *'Synodal Solidarity towards Universal Fraternity.'* I realized that my calling to live in an attitude of synodality and solidarity, of profound tenderness and sympathy is to become a promoter of universal fraternity as missionary of hope and joy.

Sacred Moments of the Chapter

The delegates participated in the Chapter proceedings owning it to a task of sacredness and highest responsibility. Every moment of the Chapter was an experience of outpouring of the Holy Spirit and prayerful support of the entire Congregation. There was a flow of new life and openness to embrace the world in an intense sense of universal solidarity and fraternity.

Theme-based inspirational talks, provocative homilies, and timely guidance of Fr. Santosh Minj SJ, the Chapter Guide, stimulated us to rediscover the inclusive responsibility of upholding one another and transcending self-interest. Sr. Valsa Koreth and Sr. Mary Karickakunnel, the Chapter Observers,

equipped with spiritual wisdom and the Congregation's legacy, kept the delegates on the right track and boosted them through their presence and timely intervention.

An inexhaustible reservoir continued to keep the pasture productive. Sr. Marykutty Antony, the President of the Chapter, enhanced our spirit to visualize streams of possibilities for the progress of the province through her meticulous planning and able chairing of the Chapter.

A review of the life and mission of the province and the discussions that followed was an eye opener for me to personal renewal and growth. It was beautiful to see the whole assembly working together for the best outcome of the Chapter.

Each day's proceedings were loaded with creativity, solemnity, insight and wisdom. As the Chapter brought a wealth of experiences and knowledge, it enriched every one. In the brain storming, delegates looked to propose new ways and relevant action strategies for the next six years that would build a more just and equitable world.

The entire Chapter journey was a divine encounter with the Lord. The journey continues and I know for sure that God's grace accompanies us. May this encounter strengthen our trust and confidence to embrace the future with an unwavering hope, full of possibilities to live the chapter moments gratefully in the realities of our lives and mission. We pray that the loving patronage of Jesus Mary and Joseph, our Founder Fr. Mathias Wolff SJ, and the Servant of God Dr. Sr. Mary Glowrey, accompany us on our journey.

CHAPTER RIPPLES

Sr. VIJAYA RANI MINNAKANTI

Guntur Province

A couple of months have passed since the end of the JMJ Guntur Province Provincial Chapter. I was happy and excited to be one of the 30 Chapter delegates under the adept leadership of Sr. Tresa KVM along with observers Sr. Mary Karickakunnel and Sr. Valsa Koreth, General Councilors, and the Chapter guide Fr. Francis Xavier SJ. Four days before the actual day of the Chapter commencement, the delegates have assembled at JMJ Provincialate, Mangalagiri for a preparatory program, which helped us to be well-composed to get into the Chapter deliberations effectively and resourcefully. The Chapter has unfolded in two major segments i.e. 7th to 11th August and 5th to 11th September, 2023. The inaugural Eucharistic celebration presided over by Rev. Mallavarapu Prakash, Archbishop of Visakhapatnam, helped us to experience the moments of grace, transformation and an atmosphere of fraternity. Right from the beginning, we experienced the invoking presence of the Holy Spirit. Fr. Francis Xavier SJ, elegantly guided the sessions focused on the theme “*Synodal Solidarity towards Universal Fraternity*,”.

In fact, there is much more happened in the Chapter than what appeared on paper. We have reviewed the life and mission of our Province through the report presentation and the discussions that ensued flow of new life. We were so engrossed in assessing our

ministries of Education, Healthcare, Evangelization, Social Apostolate, Spirituality, Community life, Formation, Finance and Province Administration. Then we came up with some solid suggestions on how we can improve doing these present ministries. The most exciting part of our Provincial Chapter was the intense moment of grace-filled listening, discerning, and deciding, allowing us to be guided by the gentle and at the same time, strong presence of the Spirit of Jesus our Master. We all have experienced this special spiritual event, as a time for community reflection and transformation. All our discussions and deliberations were focused on the mission of the province for the next six years giving a new thrust and momentum to the original spirituality and charism of our founder Rev. Fr. Mathias Wolf SJ.

We deem it appropriate to express our gracious appreciation and thanks to the Chapter guide, our Observers, and the Provincial Council team for so assiduously accompanied the delegates throughout this Chapter. To be a good disciple is really to walk behind the Lord. We allow Jesus to direct our lives and our decisions; we allow His presence to direct and move us. God chose us and set us apart for His special mission in the family of JMJ. Hence, it is the task and privilege of every one to remain ever grateful to our Congregation and serve the humanity for the greater glory of God.



Provincial Chapter 2023 A Journey of Faith and Hope



Sr. MARY MADDIMADUGU
Bharat Mata Convent, Raipur

I am grateful to God Almighty and the sisters of Raipur Province for the unique opportunity I received to be a delegate at the Provincial Chapter 2023. The time of Chapter was a channel of grace to all of us. Like the apostles in the upper room prepared to receive the Holy Spirit on the Pentecost, the members of the province prepared for this great event in prayer, recollection and discernment. We journeyed together with a single-minded focus, placing all our hopes into the hands of the Lord.

Being part of the Provincial Chapter was an eye opener for me, looking at the matters of the province in a wider perspective and understanding. The Chapter was a spiritual journey and great learning experience to me. The Chapter theme “*Synodal Solidarity towards Universal Fraternity*” enlightened and challenged me to be more humane to build fraternal relationship with the marginalized, underprivileged and downtrodden.

It was a time to recall, and reflect the mighty deeds and manifold blessings of God in each one’s life, to the Province and Congregation. It was an invitation for all of us to envisage and re-orient ourselves to all the aspects and dimensions of our life and mission in relation to the vision and charism of our Founder.

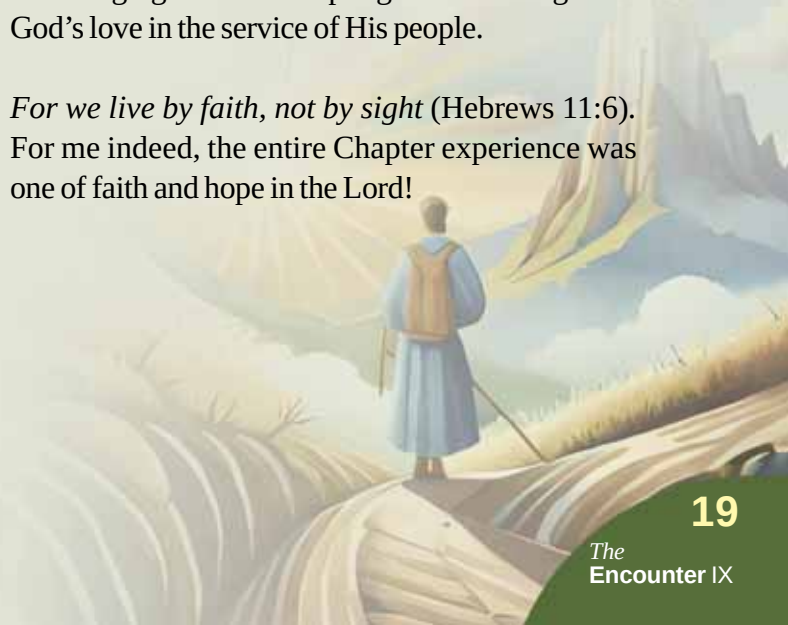
I experienced each day the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in all decisions and deliberations. I have certainly felt a deep sense of belonging and experienced wisdom by listening to everyone’s sharing with their unique ideas. I learned to discern in the Spirit, praying before taking important decisions, and taking responsibility to contribute my little for the growth of

the province. I developed a deep sense of belonging and love for the charism of our Congregation. I was inspired by the president of the Chapter Sr. Marykutty Antony for her tremendous work, smooth and systematic way of organizing the Chapter, dealing with every one’s expression spontaneously and aptly, which motivated me to be a good leader in my capacity. I was also enlightened by our Chapter guide Fr. Santosh Minj SJ, who through his inspirational dialogues inspired everyone to experience the sacredness of the Chapter all through.

To get through the hardest journey we need to take only one step at a time, but we must keep on stepping. Our journey together with one step at a time has begun into the future with our specific targets to accomplish, being convinced that the Spirit of God will move us forward to establish His kingdom of justice and peace.

The Chapter experience has carved a deep impression in my heart which will be an unforgettable memory in my life. I owe a great deal of gratitude to my Province and Congregation for accepting me to be an agent of God’s love in the service of His people.

For we live by faith, not by sight (Hebrews 11:6). For me indeed, the entire Chapter experience was one of faith and hope in the Lord!



Navigation of Spiritual Depths at the Regional Chapter of JMJ. Ghana



Sr. SHOWRILU ALLAM
JMJ Convent, KBK

In the quiet embrace of prayer and reflection, the Regional Chapter of the Congregation of Jesus Mary Joseph, Ghana unfolded a sacred journey, weaving strong threads of gratitude, discernment, and a collective yearning for the well-being of the whole Congregation.

The journey commenced with a harmonious symphony of gratitude, echoing through the hallowed halls of all convictions. Each participant, a pilgrim in their own right, brought forth tales of gratefulness, thanking God for his bountiful blessings that had illuminated our path of spiritualism. Amidst flickering candles and bowed heads, the Regional Chapter unfolded like a parchment of registering splendid thanksgiving to God. The delegates, bound by a common faith, poured forth their profound gratitude, each word resonating like a sacred hymn. It was a mosaic of moments, a collective acknowledgment of the Divine tapestry woven intricately through the journey of JMJ in Ghana.

In the heart of the discernment process, the participants embarked on a spiritual quest, seeking divine guidance for the Chapter. The room echoed with the rhythm of silent prayers, as discerning minds navigated the crossroads of the future. The process was a delicate dance between faith and uncertainty, a surrender to the divine whispers that held the roadmap for the Region.

In the hush of contemplation, the Regional Chapter outspread as a spiritual labyrinth. With eyes closed and hearts open, the members engaged in discernment, a sacred dialogue with the Divine. The future, a vast expanse, awaited our steps, and each prayerful breath

was a compass guiding towards the path of purpose and service. United in spirit, with grace, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to the divine path we tread together.

In the glow of candlelight, prayers for well-being became a spiritual balm, soothing the souls of the Region. Every sister in the region, the torchbearers of hope, offered prayers that transcended the physical and reached into the depths of each heart. It was a sacred covenant, a commitment to stand together, come what may, fostering a community fortified by the bonds of compassion and shared faith. Expectations in this spiritual journey were very high as the Congregation of JMJ banked their hope on God's manifestation. It is true that God is our provider, healer, and protector.

As the final notes of communal hymns faded into the night, the Regional Chapter drew to a close. Our Regional Chapter concluded not as an endpoint but as a springboard for continued spiritual growth. We carry with us the lessons learnt, the blessings received, and the resolve to navigate ahead with unwavering faith and dedication. We emerge from this gathering as spiritual pilgrims, transformed by the transformative power of bountiful guidance of the Divine.

JMJ SPIRITUALITY

A Treasure to Treasure

In the Year of the CHAPTER



Sr. SUVARNAKADIRI
Jyothi Nilayam, Hyderabad

Interior Spirituality

A true member of JMJ is interiorly possessed by God,
The interior spirit of self-denial, never seeking for reward.

Possessed by the extensive knowledge of Spiritual matters,
God's message of love every JMJ sister ever spreads.

The enjoyment of God and a Taste for the Divine
A fervent prayer life, great love of prayer in our hearts abide.

Unremitting trust in the Holy Spirit with an Inner freedom of Heart,
A fervent Zeal for everything that enhances glory to God's Spirit.

Exterior Spirituality

Obedience, and Modesty in external behavior,
Incessantly thoughtful and Constant recollection as our flavor.

Courageous in assigned onus with Great Courage in Apostolic works,
Humility and Prudence as our constant interior sparks.



Integration of interior and exterior spirits is our spirituality,
Finding God in all things in our daily life's reality.

With Lord of the World; for the World of the Lord,
Ascending to God; Descending to the People,
Ora et Labora; Contemplation in Action.



God's Sign to Follow Him Forever



Sr. ASHRITHA SORENG
Guntur Province

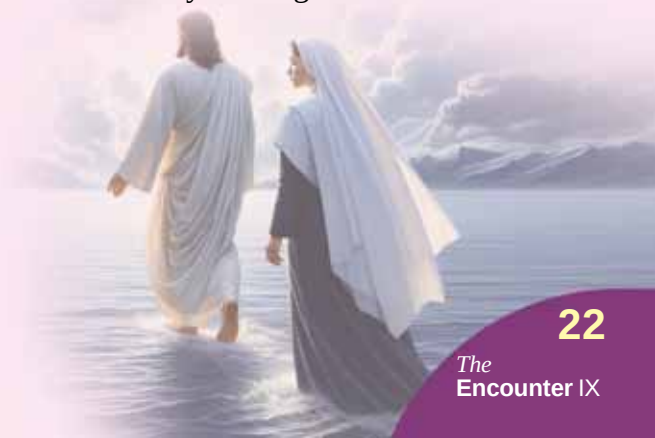
I express my gratitude for my life in the Congregation of Jesus Mary Joseph. My education in a missionary school didn't initially lead me to consider joining the convent. However, throughout my school years, various vocational camps were conducted, and during my 10th grade year, the diocese organized a camp. Following my HSC exams, I attended a 3-day vocation camp in the Sambalpur diocese, where different speakers shared their experiences and offered guidance on career and studies. On the last day, JMJ Sisters shared their life and mission stories.

These experiences left me deeply affected. One day, my close friend introduced me to JMJ sisters, and I visited the JMJ convent in Sambalpur. I spent a couple of days there and, during an evening outing with the sisters to a hospital and nearby village, I witnessed their dedication in serving the sick and needy. This moved me profoundly. I shared my experiences with my parents, but my father initially discouraged me from joining the convent, while my aunt encouraged me to consider it. These conflicting opinions left me in great confusion. Despite the uncertainty, I decided to join the JMJ convent in Sambalpur and continue my intermediate studies. Living with the sisters, I found inspiration in their prayer life and their work in the hospital. The compassionate nature of Sr. Francis Xavier, who cared for all candidates, also left a lasting impression on me. Upon completing my studies, I still questioned whether I truly had a vocation. I prayed for a sign, it came during a three-day healing prayer event, where I felt God speaking to me through

Jeremiah 29:11: "I know the plan I have for you, plans for your welfare and not for harm."

A year after my initial decision, I continued my religious formation. During postulancy holidays, my father expressed doubts about my decision, as I was the eldest child in the family. This created further confusion. I prayed for a sign to affirm my path, and during the summer vocation, I believed I received it, considering it a miracle. My family had experienced two miracles before, saving my father from a bus accident and a snake bite, leading him to believe that I was meant to continue my journey in JMJ.

I firmly believe that God's mission for a person is planned even before our existence. Engaging in the healing ministry brings me immense joy as I serve the sick and suffering. I am deeply grateful to God and my congregation for the opportunity to serve humanity in need. Caring for the sick and bringing hope to the hopeless fills me with inner joy and peace. Every day as I begin my duty, I pray to St. Joseph, to guide me in placing his healing touch through my hands. Working in the healing ministry has also helped me build self-confidence to face the daily challenges of life.



Called to be for the Lord forever

“Many are called, but few are chosen.”

-Matthew 22:14



Sr. GNANASOUNDARI

Guntur Province

I am delighted to share about my vocation to religious life. I was brought up in a traditional catholic family. I grew up in strong faith by the exemplary life of my parents and grandparents. My grandfather was particular about attending daily Holy Mass and praying the Rosary at 7 p.m. daily.

No one should miss praying Rosary otherwise we would be punished without food that night. I was also regular in attending catechism class on Sundays and I was inspired by the lives of Servite Sisters. My childhood practices of faith and prayer helped me to be disciplined, prayerful, and faithful in my Spiritual life. My parents and my grandparents' strong faith taught me to depend on God's providence.

From the age of thirteen, I had a desire to become a nun. I was faithful in attending Holy Mass although I studied in a government school from 9th to 12th standard. Whenever people ask me what would you like to become; I spontaneously said that I want to become a nun. After SSLC, I was challenged by my father to earn some money to join in further studies. I am the fourth child among five children, so I have not learned any work till 10th standard because my three older siblings did everything for me. It was a great challenge for me to go for work and at the same time to accomplish my desire to become a nun. I have learnt Beedi making and saved Rs.1000 within two months during holidays. I gave the money to my father

and asked him to join me in Higher Secondary School. Once I completed 12th standard, I expressed my desire to my parents, that I wish to become a nun.

My father had a desire to send me for further studies since I got good results in 12th standard. But I refused



it and insisted, that he joins me somewhere to become a nun. One of my aunts helped me to join JMJ through Sr. Antoniammal Savarirayan. It's God's call for me to join in the Society of JMJ. After the initial formation, I made my first commitment to the Lord on 29th July 2009, and I am determined to live my commitment faithfully forever.

I am very grateful to the Congregation of JMJ for the opportunities and the support provided to me to equip myself to be a committed religious. I am inspired and motivated by the exemplary lives of our senior sisters whose prayer life and commitment to apostolic work and faithfulness to God stirs me to persevere in religious life and serve the Lord through my apostolate. I feel happy that as a teacher, I am able to contribute to the development of many students, especially through my teaching to the underprivileged students as well the slow learners. I wish to live as a joyful and committed sister of JMJ by living up to the spirituality and charism of our Founder.

Unveiling the Academic Tapestry: My Journey in Leuven



Sr. MARY SANJUKTA EKKKA

Leuven, Belgium

In the heart of Leuven's cobblestone embrace, my academic journey unfolds a symphony of knowledge echoing through historic corridors, the melody of diverse cultures, in the rhythm of personal growth. At Leuven's Catholic University, where each lesson learned is carved not only in textbooks but also in the vibrant tapestry of life's experiences.

The privilege of studying at this prestigious University has been a transformative journey that I am profoundly thankful for. The opportunity to pursue my academic endeavours at *Katholieke Universiteit* (KU), Leuven has not only broadened my intellectual horizons of critical thinking but also has enriched my religious life, faith and strengthened my vocation. Belgium has a significant historical connection with the Catholic faith, and Catholicism has played a crucial role in shaping the country's cultural and religious landscape. Belgium is a home to impressive Cathedrals, Churches, and religious institutions that reflect the historical prominence of Catholicism. However, Belgium has seen a decline in Church participation and religious adherence in recent years. Despite this decline, Catholicism remains an important cultural and historical aspect of Belgian identity and that is the beauty I cherish here. Moreover, the international sisters' community in Justus Lipsius College (JLC) brings a unique sense of delight and fulfilment as we come together as one family collectively. The daily Eucharistic Celebration and the special Friday adoration serve as vital sources of spiritual rejuvenation amid the academic challenges and adversities I encounter. It is truly a source of profound joy to reside among individuals of diverse cultures, nationalities, languages, and perspectives. The community spirit at JLC enhances and enriches my religious life. In addition to this we the four student sisters gather together on every Saturday for rosary and sharing which strengthens our JMJ community bond. My profound gratitude to my sisters Anitha

Showri Rani and Arputha Lilly, for their unwavering support, companionship, and encouragement in the moments of my challenges and difficulties.

My academic tenure at KU Leuven is a voyage characterized by the exploration and discovery of novel ideas, fostering a culture of critical thinking and the acquisition of new found knowledge. Initially, navigating the education system was an uphill battle, marked by the complexities of learning different languages and the constant demands of weekly assignments. The first year was not a seamless journey; instead, it resembled more a path strewn with thorns and thistles than a bed of roses. Nevertheless, it was within these adversities that I genuinely felt the mercy and grace of God guiding me throughout my academic pursuits. My engagement in Biblical studies, with a particular focus on my research examining the theme "*Discipleship in the Gospel of John: An Exegetical analysis of John 20:21 in light of the Father-Son-Disciples relationship*" has facilitated a profound expansion of my intellectual as well as my spiritual horizons. This exploration delves deeply into the fundamental essence of discipleship, specifically within the dimension of relationship and mission as elucidated in the Gospel of John. Consequently, through the pursuit of this research, I not only experience intellectual growth but also engage in introspection regarding my personal relationship with Jesus as one of His beloved disciples.

As I reflect on this remarkable chapter of my life in Leuven for past one year, I am profoundly aware that none of this would have been possible without the vision and commitment of my JMJ family. I am truly honoured and grateful for the opportunities bestowed upon me by the General and the Provincial Councils. I conclude my thought with a "couplet":

*A scholarly sojourn, a pilgrimage grace.
This is my academic journey
in Leuven's embrace.*

An Exodus Experience of a Pilgrim

Sr. MARTINA DEVARAPALLI

JMJ Nilayam, Bangalore

Here is a pilgrim who says that she had an exodus experience, and her life can be compared with a butterfly, from the garden of Parvathi Puram, Andhra Pradesh. The little butterfly stood courageously all the walks of life being beautiful with variety of colors of life yet very tender, unassuming, but strong to withstand any climate.

Sr. Martina was born to Appa Rao and Papamma. Her father was a businessman, and mother a housewife, a woman of deep faith. Little Martina was from a traditional Hindu family; nobody noticed that young she-wolf who was born in faraway Parvathi Puram. Father was a Hindu pujari (priest), who taught slokas from Ramayana and Mahabharata to many students who wished to become priests. Right from her childhood Martina had least interest in Hindu poojas and customs of the family. It is evident that God called and loved this child as in Isaiah 43: 1, *“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name: you are mine”*.

Sisters of St. Ann's of Luzern were in her town, so little Martina flew to that garden of sisters and was inspired by their way of life. At the age of 11, she heard one sister warden saying, *‘without a ticket you cannot reach Heaven’*. So innocently she asked her, *‘please give me that ticket’*, and she did take the ticket at the age of 11, without the knowledge of her parents. Sensing her honest desire, the sisters prepared her for the sacraments; she received baptism on 5th May 1951 and the Holy Communion on 6th May. Sr. Magdelene, a French nun gave a word on behalf of Martina to the Parish Priest Fr. Mathew, that the young Martina will never leave the Catholic faith. Her *‘first Yes to God and first love to Christ’* kept growing all through her life's journey and in this



way, she is a true pilgrim journeying to the promised land.

Eventually, Martina's classmates informed her family that she received Baptism, her father was furious and said to his youngest daughter Martina to go away from the house and *‘not to step into the house anymore’*. As a result, she had no place in her home and was rejected even by her relatives. The little girl could only cry and immediately ran to the sisters where she was studying, and the sisters knew that it would happen. They asked her to leave her faith and go back home but to their wonder she said *“NO”*. She was ready to face the situation for the sake of that *‘ticket to Heaven’*. Sisters stood by her and admitted her in the boarding. From then on she had faced many challenges without the support of the family and after two months, in the month of July her father died but she was not allowed to see his body.

After the death of the father, her brothers compelled her to come back to the family and practice Hindu tradition but her mother said, *‘let her worship the God of her heart, for your father could not bring her back, you and me too cannot. Let her be happy with the faith she has embraced’*.



At the age of 15, as she was travelling by train, she was caught up by two men who were about to abuse her, and she was in fear and trembling praying to Jesus. For her surprise a woman came and risked saving her and she believes that it was Mother Mary who came to her rescue and the pilgrim continued her journey. She says that in her life's journey as a pilgrim she lost many material things, even her educational certificates but by God's providence she found them again.

All for the love of Jesus – A Daring and Dashing Young girl

Martina lost her mother when she was in 10th standard. She completed her teacher's training with MSFS fathers and by then her siblings started accepting her. At the age of 17, she met her brother who was trying to settle her in marriage among her relatives. But Martina told him that she never wanted to marry but become a *RELIGIOUS NUN*. He was surprised to hear that but Martina was brave and strong in her decision. None could stop her, so she started her journey and it was already arranged by Sr. Magdelene. Martina did not want to join St. Ann's Congregation as it was closer to her hometown. Sr. Augustine, the then superior of the convent, understood her intention and asked Martina to make a novena for choosing the Congregation before she joins as a candidate. Sr. Augustine sent letters about Martina's desire to become nun, to four Congregations and one among them was Society of Jesus Mary Joseph. To her surprise, she received immediate and first letter from Mother Ferdinando, our Dutch

missionary at Guntur, asking her to come and join as a candidate. Martina was not happy with the letter from the JMJ Society, as JMJ was the last choice for her but her mentor Sr. Augustine encouraged her saying that it was God's plan that she could join the Soc. of JMJ. She just obeyed half-heartedly and entered the Society as a candidate. She joined in 1963 when Mother Josepha was the formator, who was an inspiration, guide, support and mentor in all the walks of her religious life.

She never desired for higher studies, rather she remained as an elementary school teacher and as a boarding mistress all through her life in most of our institutions. Her students, till today, lovingly remember her as a mother. After her school hours Sr. Martina was ever ready to go to the villages and teach catechism and prepare children for the first holy communion and confession.

For this dynamic religious, Fr. Mathew (late) was the spiritual guide who inspired her right from the childhood and nurtured in her deep Christian faith and accompanied on her pilgrim journey. Sr. Martina lived a hidden life with unwavering faith and all for the glory of God. In 1976 she was awarded as the best teacher by the Govt. of Andhra Pradesh for her dedicated services and she continued to be the best till today.

This pilgrim is always active, moving and running in life never thinking of herself. Her only goal in life is to work hard like a giant and always ready for souls to save them for God. As an obedient daughter of Fr. Mathias Wolff, she is waiting to snatch her ticket to Heaven.

My Journey as a Pilgrim in JMJ

"It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit" -Jn 15:16



Sr. ANNIE STELLA GALI
Guntur Province

I was born in a pious and devoted Catholic family, reared and nurtured in a very faith-filled milieu. My parents who knew very well about their responsibility helped me to receive the sacraments at an appropriate age. My mother often used to talk to me about the consecrated life, and its values, which fostered in me with a spark of hope to choose religious life at a very early age. The seed was already sown as the book of Jeremiah says, *"Before I formed you in the womb, I know you; before you were born, I dedicated you; a prophet to the nations, I appointed you"* (Jer 1:5). So, the seed grew as I grew. I was sent to school. As God willed *"when the fullness of time had come"* (Gal 4:4), I remember that in class VIII, I decided to become a consecrated person to serve the Lord. The innate desire grew within me until I successfully completed 10th standard. Though there were many religious houses in the vicinity of my home, I didn't choose one among them. At that juncture in the year 1980, I happened to meet JMJ Sisters Emmanuela Gopu, Joannet Mallavarapu and Regina Chinnappan who came for vocation promotion. Their simplicity and approach touched me very much and the Holy Spirit prompted me to join the family of JMJ.

My deepest desire was to serve the sick and the dying and I preferred Nursing profession for my career. However, the Congregation wanted me to take up the teaching profession as per the needs of the time. During this time there was a great need for sister teachers who can teach in Tamil medium school and the government was willing to sanction aided posts for sisters. I have to forego my desire for the sake of the common mission of the Congregation. Like Jeremiah who listened to God, leaving out his ways and deeds, I also listened to the guidelines of the Congregation and obeyed the authority. After the completion of teachers' training, I worked as a teacher

and head mistress in different places like Vairavikulam RC School, Palayamkottai Diocese; RC school, Trichy Diocese and RC School Marakkanam, Pondicherry Diocese. Teaching the children hailing from lower strata of life, the marginalized, and socially rejected ones has given me a lot of joy and happiness. The extra interest that is taken in unearthing and bringing to the limelight the hidden talents in every child enthused them to achieve goals in their lives.

After school hours, on weekends, and during holidays, I visit the houses of the downtrodden, poverty-stricken families, houses of the poor children in the class being their comfort and consolation; and sharing in their joys and sorrows. It was a great opportunity to visit the nomadic community and help them in their needs. I could also counsel and settle certain family issues by the grace of God and could bring the separated couples together. The visit to the sick and bedridden people in houses and hospitals enabled me to pray for them. The neighbourhood ministry gave me great satisfaction as a consecrated person. Pondering over the following bible verse, reinforces me to do everything for Christ. *"Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me"* (Mt 25:40).

The Charism of our Founder Rev. Fr. Mathias Wolff SJ *"An Ever-Adaptable Apostolic Availability"* inspired me to be always faithful and available to the ministry. As a JMJ sister, when I look back on the path I have travelled, I feel very happy and joy fills my heart. There is not an iota of grief or resentment whatsoever. With the fullness of my heart, I rejoice with Mother Mary praising the Lord, *"My soul rejoices in God my saviour. The Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name"* (Lk 1:47, 49).

The History behind the Name of our Congregation (De Naam Onzer Congregatie by Fr. Dekkers)



Sr. ARPUTHA LILLY ANTONY

Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium

*The past, when known, becomes history;
when unknown, it persists as a mystery.*

Reflecting on my journey as a budding historian, I find myself rewinding about two decades to the pivotal moment when I heard the name Mathias Wolff for the first time. It all started with a casual conversation with a family friend working at the JMJ school in Kallidaikurichi. “I heard that you want to join the JMJ Congregation and do you know the name of the founder?” My response was a simple and honest “no.” That is when for the first time I heard the name Mathias Wolff, a name completely unfamiliar to me at that time. I never knew that this introduction would kickstart my journey into studying and researching the life of this enigmatic figure, shaping an unexpected and intriguing chapter in my life as an aspiring historian.

Over the course of my four-year theological journey at Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, I had numerous opportunities to explore further into the life of our founder and the rich history of the Congregation. In this article, my aim is to provide a lucid explanation of the history of the name of the Congregation as outlined by Fr. Dekkers, the rector of Mariënburg which was published in 1933 in the magazine of the Congregation. The magazine, in its early years, was referred to as *Tijdschrift der congregatie van het Gezelschap van J.M.J.* (Journal of the Congregation of the Society of J.M.J.). It served as an internal publication and circulated every three months starting from 1932. However, during the war years, the magazine faced an interruption and was not issued between July 1940 and November 1945. In the post-war period, specifically from 1946 to 1952, the magazine appeared every two months. The editorial office was situated in the Mariënburg monastery in

Den Bosch. Transitioning into later years, the magazine evolved in nomenclature, first as *J.M.J. Congregatie-tijdschrift* (J.M.J. Congregation Magazine) from 1959 and later as *Sociëteit van JMJ* (Society of JMJ) from 1965 onwards.

According to Fr. Dekkers, the name of the Congregation from the beginning was *Gezelschap van Jezus Maria Jozef*, which literally means Society of Jesus Mary Joseph. The word *Gezelschap* means company or society. This was in use from 1822 and Dekkers mentions a document signed by Wolff and various other documents, in which it was mentioned as “Institute of the Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary, otherwise called *Pédagogie Chrétienne* or Society of Jesus Mary Joseph.” Dekkers emphasizes that the name of our Congregation serves a dual purpose. Firstly, it carries a broad identifier, “Institute of the Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary”, a commonality with many other Congregations in those times. Secondly, it features a more specific and distinctive designation, namely *Pédagogie Chrétienne* and “Society of Jesus, Mary, Joseph”. These unique designations were intentionally chosen to set our Congregation apart from others. The question arises: Why did Father Wolff opt for a double special name? Distinguishing our Congregation from others did not necessitate such complexity; one special designation would have sufficed. However, there must have been a deliberate reason for this decision which was influenced by historical circumstances. Dekkers explains that in the early 19th century, anti-Catholic and anti-religious sentiments were prevalent in the United Kingdom of the Netherlands. Government officials, including King William I, viewed certain

religious orders, such as the Jesuits, as dangerous. This atmosphere of intolerance extended to the point of restricting the dress and activities of religious groups. Given this context, our sisters faced limitations. They were not permitted to wear religious garments, and in public, they were addressed as *Juffrouw* (Miss) followed by their secular names. Even Father Wolff, then known as *Mon Père*, had to exercise caution during visits, arriving discreetly and departing before morning.

In the face of such adversity, Father Wolff took a cautious approach to establishing the first school. Instead of using the Congregation's name, he founded it under the guise of a "Society of the Sisters" within the "Association of Werkhoven and Co." The apprehension surrounding the name "Society of Jesus Mary Joseph" stemmed from concerns that it might be perceived as too religious and, specifically, too Jesuitical during a period of heightened anti-Catholic sentiment. The cautious measures taken underscore the challenges faced by our Congregation in navigating a climate of intolerance.

Hence, Dekkers supposes that a second special name was introduced, namely *Pédagogie Chrétienne*. This choice likely appeared harmless, avoiding any potential offense. Simultaneously, the name aptly reflected the mission of the Congregation. *Pédagogie Chrétienne* would primarily be utilized for external, official purposes, such as documents involving government interactions. Conversely, within the monastery and monastic life, at least initially, the more explicitly religious name of "Society of Jesus Mary Joseph" would be retained.

This premise finds support in the oldest Constitution of our Congregation, approved in 1823 by Archpriests G. van Nooy, J. Cramer, and J. van Banning. In this Constitution, the Congregation is plainly referred to as *Association des Sœurs de Notre Dame, dites de la Pédagogie Chrétienne* (Association of the Sisters of Our Lady, known as



JMJ Initials in the Stamp of Pédagogie Chrétienne

Pédagogie Chrétienne), a title designed for government engagements. Additionally, the first stamp of our Congregation prominently displays the words *Pédagogie Chrétienne*, with the initials JMJ somewhat discreetly placed in the middle. This dual nomenclature appears to have served a strategic purpose in navigating the societal climate of the time. This is further proven in the book, *Geschiedk. schets der congregatie, opgericht in 1822 door den Zeer Eerw. P. M. Wolff; Herinnering aan het 50-jarig bestaan 1822-1872*, "Historical Sketch of the Congregation, founded in 1822, by the Very Venerable Father M. Wolff; Commemoration of the 50th anniversary, 1822-1872" which was written by Van Guilick and published in 1872. Dekker quotes page 27 which states: "Through the intercession of Bishop Antonucci, on March 3, 1839, H.H. Gregory XVI granted various favors to the Congregation. These favors were granted by the High Honorable Internuntius to the Honorable Father Wolff by letter of July 27, 1839. With joy, the good Father acknowledged God's guidance in this too, according to his custom. His *Pédagogie Chrétienne* of 1822, known for some time as the Society of Jesus Mary Joseph..." Notably, the phrase 'known for some time' suggests that by 1839, the Congregation had already been recognized as the Society of J.M.J. for a considerable duration.

IV. De oplossing (Maart 1840)

42. Nottigenstrande al de verrichtingen, waaraan de Congregatie sedert 1832 Blijt stonde, stelde het Kerkelyk gezag de groote belangstelling in haan bleef. Door twisfenkomst van Mr. Antommari, den Vice-Superior der Hollandsche kerk, verhaide Kith. Gregorius VII. den 3 Maart 1837 wederom eene gunsten aan de Congregatie te geven, ten gunsten door den Abg. Leem Intennummied aan den Linn. Peter Hoff medegedeeld, by missive van 27 July 1839. Het vragde verhaide de goede Interich hierin volgens zijne gewoonte gods leiding. Zynde Pedagogie schetste van 1832, sedert eenigen tyd bekend als de Congregatie van Jesus Maria Joseph, of ook wel als de Congregatie van Onse Lieve Vrouwenaft sijnt in verrijping van de Heure de Grote Domeyn, en 2 & 6 lly, seken by het onderwijs en der gunsten al tot een hooger leven opgewekt. Wy zullen dit stuk in zijn geheel later mede deelen.

43. Chertusschen bepalen wij ons bij de opgave om den hoofdschakel;
ken insofve zijne Heilighheid verlaende dus om de Zusters de vol-
genda gemeten:

1. De spraking van den D. Kruisweg in de kruispathen der
langzame, met al de afstanden daaraan verbonden
2. Een vollen oflaat by het afleggen der eerste gelofte van
gehoorzaamheid,
3. Hiernaast twee een vollen oflaat by het vernieuwen der gelofte
4. Een vollen oflaat in het uur des doots, by het aanroepen van

Historical Sketch of the Congregation: Commemoration of the 50th anniversary, 1822-1872

In 1842 and 1844, Father Wolff continued to refer to our Congregation in official documents as the “Institute of Christian Education, otherwise called the Society of Jesus Mary Joseph.” However, from 1845 onwards, the phrase *Pédagogie Chrétienne* appears to have been permanently omitted. Consequently, the definitive name of our Congregation since then has

been “Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Virgin Mary, called the Society of Jesus Mary Joseph.”

According to Dekkers, father Wolff derived the name “Society of Jesus Mary Joseph” in a simple manner. Being a Jesuit himself, a member of the Society of Jesus, he did not adopt the name literally and unchanged for the new Congregation, as that would go against established customs and Church regulations. Instead, Father Wolff elegantly addressed this by adding the names ‘Mary’ and ‘Joseph’ to the existing name ‘Jesus.’ This simple addition resolved the issue, giving the Congregation the meaningful name of “Society of Jesus Mary Joseph.” All ecclesiastical approvals received by the Congregation in 1840 correctly reflect the name. Bishop A. Antonucci, Bishop Den Dubbelden, and Msgr. H. van der Velden all referred to the Congregation as the *Société de Jésus Marie Joseph*. In 1845, Bishop Zwijsen, while approving the Constitutions of the Congregation, called it the “Society of Jesus Mary Joseph.” Yet, in the official documents from Rome and the Bishops, and in Father Wolff’s writings, the consistent use of “Society of Jesus Mary Joseph” persisted. The evolution of the name remains a testament to the history and development of the Congregation over time.

From 1848, the name Society of Jesus Mary Joseph underwent modifications that will be thoroughly expounded upon in my forthcoming article.



Recollecting Past for a Fruitful Present and Hopeful Future



Sr. ANITHA KONDAVETI
Leuven, Belgium

“Many are called, but few are chosen.”

-Matthew 22:14

From 8th – 11th November 2023, I participated in an international conference called LEST (Leuven Encounters in Systematic Theology) in which I had to present a paper as part of my PhD program requirements. In commemoration of the 60 years of the Second Vatican Council, this year’s LEST conference focused on the global reception of the Second Vatican Council. Following the conference’s theme, my paper is titled ‘Religious Life & *Aggiornamento* – A Case for the Global Reception of the Council’. I tried to present the Society of Jesus Mary Joseph (JMJ) as an example of the global reception of the Council, based on the renewal processes adopted in our Congregation at the time of the Council, i.e. during the Chapters of 1962 and 1968, and the renewal followed after that.

In preparing for this paper during my research in the archives (Sint. Agatha, Nijmegen, The Netherlands), I encountered numerous interesting and inspiring things; one of those many things that I would like to share briefly is the essence of the speech by Dr. H. Geurtsen S.J., given to the Chapter delegates on the occasion of the General Chapter, November 13th 1968. In the following paragraphs, I will present the gist of Fr. Geurtsen’s speech. Fr. Geurtsen S.J. centred his speech on the Vatican II document *Gaudium et Spes*, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, especially on the numbers 12-22. (I suggest reading these numbers from the document). He highlighted two aspects which are central to *Gaudium et Spes* and are essential to adopt and implement as renewal process by all the religious congregations, to be relevant in the contemporary world: a) the dignity of moral conscience and b) the excellence of human liberty.

The Dignity of Moral Conscience – Speaking of the dignity of the human person, as the centre of the universe, *Gaudium et Spes* underlines the value of personal conscience which is called a law written in his/her heart by God. Therefore, each one’s conscience is a personal law, which human beings do not give to themselves but God, and it always invites one to love, to do good, and to shun evil. This personal law of God (personal conscience) keeps one under obligation to obey God. The voice of conscience is at the same time the voice of God and the voice of the human person. Here the most individual meeting takes place between God and humans. The judgement on human beings is passed in his/her conscience. Human beings are not judged by the outward law, nor by a mere transcendent God, but the judgement is the work of a law written into conscience itself and at the same time the judgement of God, who himself makes known his will to humans by his voice which echoes in their conscience.

Not only for every Catholic but for every human being, their conscience is the last norm and the highest resort, by which anybody should judge and be judged. Even if someone is wrong in one’s decisions of conscience due to invincible ignorance, the conscience does not lose its stature and one must still obey it. But when one has too little care in looking for the truth and good, and when habits of sin gradually almost blind/blunt conscience, it loses its stature. Conscience should always try to gain clarity/clarity about the decision to be taken, and it is also self-evident that this search and finding of the right decision is not merely an individual affair. For, human beings are essentially social and the Christian is a member of the Church with or under a specific authority.

All these social dimensions should fully be taken into account when forming a decision of conscience. But the role of fellow human beings, the authority, and the law is only of service to the decision which is ultimately made by an individual. The outward laws and authority are only valuable in so far as they are understood by the conscience, make their obliging power felt there and in so far as they stimulate a personal decision of conscience. Every automatic fulfilment of laws and rules is contrary to the dignity of the human person. The voice of conscience in which the voice of God himself echoes and as it is heard and understood in the silence of the heart, forms the ultimate norm of human action. However, this does not mean that one overthrows the authority or the law but the wisdom of authority must support the candidate to form oneself in the spirit of the religious institute into which one enters with complete freedom and commitment. Incorporation of the spirit of the religious institute must not be limited to the laws introduced by the authority which weakens the personal conscience, will, and judgement but must aid in forming personal conscience as one that is capable of listening and obeying the voice of God.

The Council document *Gaudium et Spes* highlights that the important element required for the formation of conscience is love. It says that personal judgment and action must proceed from the source of inspiration which is love. In a wonderful manner, conscience reveals that law which is fulfilled in the love of God and one's neighbour. Love is the law and those who observe this law ever better, will in the given situations feel more clearly what is to be done and what decisions to be made. Whoever loves God and neighbour sincerely, has the right foundation from where every other commandment, prescription, or decision will be observed or made in the right and most original way.

Therefore, the dignity of moral conscience or giving importance to the personal conscience of every person is not to be understood as a threat to order, law, or authority. It must be understood that both those in

authority and every member of the religious institute must form and follow one's conscience because it is there that the Lord dwells and invites us personally to follow his commandment of love. This will ultimately result not in the imposition of rules, implementation of personal desires or motivations, disorder and individualism but in the incorporation of the true spirit of our congregation, working for the common good, respect for each other, and breaking all barriers and discrimination.

The Excellence of Liberty – To safeguard the personal dignity of conscience, a climate of liberty is more fundamentally required. *Gaudium et Spes* No. 17 points to the fact that 'only in freedom can one direct him/herself towards goodness'. Fr. Geurtsen reiterates that we must not fear liberty but promote it, for we cannot disengage the pursuit of the good from freedom/liberty. Thus, the text of the *Gaudium et Spes* runs, "that one should act in accordance with a free and conscious choice, personally, inwardly persuaded and not by either blind impulse from within or coercion from without." However, an unavoidable fact is that wounded by sin and being prisoners of their passions, human beings (we) often use our liberty in the wrong way. The Church believes that the grace of God liberates us, raises us and enables us effectively and integrally, to tend to what is good.

Therefore, we must not fear human liberty, which is pre-eminently a sign of the image of God in us, because this liberty although in itself is inclined to evil in concrete situations, was restored by grace, and has become a more abundant and effective liberty and so it is more capable of submitting itself, in the right ordering on God and humans. Therefore, the right exercise of freedom or control of freedom is not necessarily by the law or authority but by one's intimate union with God. The starting point for considering authority and obedience must be respect for human freedom.

According to the document *Gaudium et Spes*, Fr. Geurtsen says that the Church has radically changed its attitude by laying aside its distrust and entered into

an era of optimism after the Second Vatican Council, so must likewise the concept of freedom and the practice of it within the religious life, be courageously and basically reconsidered. Each religious should retain the possibility of framing her life pattern within the spirit, proper to her institute. 'For God willed that man should be left in the hand of his own counsel, so that blessed he might of his own accord seek his creator and freely attain his full and blessed perfection by clinging to Him.' This does not mean each one does what one wishes. Fr. Geurtsen continues, by the profession into a religious congregation, the religious naturally accepts, of her own free will, certain obligations, she commits herself to serve the kingdom of God in communion with others. This initial freedom with which she made her choice must remain apparent and effective during the rest of her life. The response in freedom to the invitation of the Lord must be ratified and developed in a climate of liberty.

The vow of obedience is not an obstacle to this freedom because the vows are already included in the free and total commitment of oneself to the Lord for the sake of the Gospel. The religious promises God and the community which she enters to make her thinking, her aspirations, and her activity, a co-thinking, a co-striving, and a co-acting with the community, according to the spirit and within the concrete goals of the religious institute. The authority, present in a relevant way in any community, be it large or small must promote as much as possible the liberty that the religious has vowed to God and the community, to create a climate in which the individual religious as well as the community itself are enabled to exert their responsibility in freedom. The authority must help to stimulate the personal commitment and initiative of the individual within the community and create a climate in which the individual can exert her inalienable freedom.

My Reflection – First of all, I feel blessed to have access to these sources of rich wisdom and to be able to share a part of it with all of you. In my research, I realized that this speech of Fr. Geurtsen S.J. must have been one of the significant insights that contributed to the change of mentality, renewal, and growth in our Congregation from the time of the Second Vatican Council. These two elements are understood as the foundational elements required to be inculcated in every member of the Congregation to implement the principles of administration, namely subsidiarity, collegiality, pluriformity, and decentralization.

Even today in our Constitutions article no. 49, which speaks of the principles of administration begins with the words '*respect for the dignity of the person*'. The dignity of moral conscience and the excellence of liberty invite us to a renewed understanding of authority and obedience. They emphasize respect for each other both in our community and the people we serve. These concepts challenge us to form ourselves in the image and likeness of God by overcoming our prejudices and by being true to the free choice of total commitment we made in our Congregation. They invite us to be aware of the divine dwelling in the core of our conscience and to respond to the commandment of love. Authority is not about imposing rules and demanding adherence but about forming consciences and promoting freedom. Obedience is not about blind adherence to the rules and authority but consciously and freely, day after day growing in the true spirit of the Congregation in response to the love commandment of God within the community and in the ministry. If all of us are aware of these two elements and form our conscience in love and freedom, then obedience is not difficult and authority is not a tyranny anymore, but all of us, fully incorporated in one spirit of the institute work for the common good of all people and the coming of the Kingdom of God.



Nurturing Hearts: A Transformation in Formation

Sr. JYOTHI KUDUMULA,
JMJ Formation House, Sunyani



Formation in the past aimed to create “perfect people” for the Church, leading to an unhealthy obsession with perfection. However, this approach brought fear, anxiety, and constant tension, hindering the growth and development of candidates. In contrast, modern formation programs should prioritize shaping candidates’ hearts to resemble Jesus, fostering a deep connection with Him.

Enthusiasm is paramount for formators, approaching their work with love, joy, and a passion for guiding others in the spirit of Christ. Their enthusiasm becomes a shining example, inspiring candidates on their journey. Encouragement plays a pivotal role, allowing formators to accept individual differences, provide patient corrections, and foster diligence and motivation.

Creativity is essential, going beyond rules and regulations to transform the lives of formees. By engaging candidates’ minds through innovative approaches, formators generate positive emotions and cohesion within the community.

The evolution of formation has shifted towards nurturing the hearts of candidates to embody the Spirit of Christ. Formators must possess enthusiasm, encouragement, humor, and a genuine interest in formees. With adequate preparation and ongoing personal and professional development, formators can guide future religious towards authenticity, self-discovery, and growth. By embracing these principles, a stronger and more vibrant future for the Church is ensured.

My experience in Ghana, has been transformative. I am grateful for the opportunities provided by my

superiors and the invaluable knowledge and growth I have gained through the formators’ program. The exchange of cultures and the application of psychological techniques have further equipped me to be an effective formator. I am filled with enthusiasm and readiness to continue serving as an instrument in God’s garden, nurturing and forming young individuals for His Kingdom in Ghana.

Living at the Institute for Continuing Formation (ICF) for nine months was a tremendous privilege. The program for the formation of formators, which I had the fortune to participate in, was truly enlightening. Gathering with international formators from Uganda, Cameroon, Nigeria, and Ghana, I had the opportunity to explore diverse cultures, values, and formation methods.

The course for Formation of the formators has had a profound impact on my spiritual and intellectual growth. I have been inspired by the insightful sessions led by various resource persons. These sessions were reflective and thought provoking. Some topics compelled me to delve deep into self-reflection, while the psychological techniques taught were highly applicable. Reclaiming the inner child and sharing my sacred story fostered self-awareness and aided formees in understanding themselves and their own motivations. Continuous self-awareness and self-consciousness are essential in forming one’s own character, feelings, and motivations.

I am filled with gratitude to Almighty God for calling me to serve as a missionary in Ghana where I have been blessed with countless opportunities to witness the love of God and contribute to the formation of young people.

Missionaries' experiences from PAGE, AMERICA



Sr. SAROJINI BARLA

My life is a journey of faith and trust in God's providence. From 02 October 2014 until now was a special chapter in my life as a missionary in a foreign land. The LORD had said to Abraham, *"Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you"* (Genesis 12:1). After 9th year of my life in the USA, I remembered how I responded to the call of God so willingly and joyfully and today I feel even more blessed being convinced that those leaving behind everything for the sake of the Lord shall be blessed a hundredfold.

As a missionary in a country like the USA is really challenging. I live here by faith knowing that God does not need my talent, ability or strength but a willing heart to obey Him. I am fully convinced that He guides me as a shepherd guides his flock. God is faithful to me to provide everything in my hunger and plenty. Indeed, we need so little to be happy in life and life has taught me this truth.

Fr. Mathias Wolff said, *"A sincere Sister of JMJ should carry the four corners of the world in her heart and be ready to be sent even to America"* (PM. Ch. 5). Being a missionary is to be sent out anywhere, at any time. Yes, today I am proud of myself to fulfill the dream of our founder. Immaculate

Heart School demands of us to have the heart of God and to have a deep desire to establish the Kingdom of God. To be able to be a missionary we need to get back to the roots of JMJ and listen to what Fr. Mathias Wolff is saying to us.

My mission journey in JMJ Page Community is very active and alive. Parishioners, parents and students are very good-mannered, respectful and supportive to the sisters in all the ways. I enjoy my life as a teacher at Immaculate Heart of Mary School. We, all of us – black, white, red, yellow and brown – live together with one spirit of JMJ. Our school is developing well and now extends to 4th grade. Students are very innocent, simple, compassionate, responsible and kind. They teach me to be passionate for my mission, and compassionate to the poor. I am trying my utmost to be responsible to live my commitment faithfully and to grow in deep love and loyalty to the Congregation.

Today our vocation is to contribute to the building of fraternal community, where ever we are and in whatever we do. It's the virtue of generosity that allows us to become fully human. By nature, we are made to love, loving our neighbors whose culture, languages and way of life are different from ours. I pray that every missionary learns to forgive, to be kind and understanding and surrender oneself to God to cherish the inner peace and joy that only God can give us.



Missionaries' experiences from PAGE, AMERICA



Sr. REENA JACOB

In the year 2013, my missionary journey has taken me from my province Bangalore to Zuni, New Mexico, USA. There were two JMJ sisters Mary Padma and Rose Rani in Zuni with whom I made a community of three. I was joyful to see Sr. Sundari Singareddy and Sr. Regina Chinnappan, the former provincials of Bangalore and Guntur, who were in Zuni for visitation. My career as nurse had been changed into a teacher for 9 months in St. Antony Mission School in Zuni. I enjoyed being with kids there and fortunate to have Mrs. Trudy as the main class teacher.

In May 2014, I accompanied Fr. Tom to the beautiful town called Page in Arizona. I was asked to work in the school. I was the only teacher in that small school. It was a challenging experience for me in a new place with a new career. I experienced God's accompanying presence very close in my life during that time. Every day was a faith experience for me. Gradually, I was getting to know the neighbourhood and places in the town. I was forced to drive the car since there is no public transport and as the days went, I picked up my confidence to drive well.

In October 2014, Sr. Satya and Sr. Sarojini came to Page as missionaries. Three of us formed the second JMJ Community in the USA. It was a happy memory that Fr. Tom gave us an opportunity to plant three saplings in our campus. Once the school had enough teachers, I got into my nursing career, working in a

differently abled and mentally challenged people's home called 'Helping Hands' for 6 years.

Eventually, I prepared myself and wrote NCLEX exam to become a registered nurse in the USA. It was almost impossible to pass this exam and especially for people like me who is just an average performer. I wrote the test three times but couldn't succeed. I was disappointed and decided not to write the test anymore. My provincial encouraged me to take the test once again. I took it very seriously knowing that I can't do it with my own merit. I sought the intercession of Mother Mary, prayed many rosaries and repeated the Word of God, "*For you who revere my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall*" (Malachi 4.2) several times a day. Once again, I went for the test, entered the waiting hall and prayed the Rosary. I invited Mother Mary to go with me for the test. By God's grace the test was very easy, I was confident that I would pass and when the result came, I passed the test. Surely, it was by the grace of God and a miracle through our Blessed Mother.

Now I am working as a nurse, taking care of a cerebral palsy client with ventilator and gastric tube. This is the most satisfying job I have ever done in my life. I thank God and I am grateful to our Congregation for giving me the chance to render my services to the most deserving client under my care here in Page, Arizona.



Missionaries' experiences from PAGE, AMERICA



Sr. SUDHA BASANT

Fr. Mathais Wolff said, *“A sincere sister of J.M.J should carry the four parts of the world in her heart and be ready to go to America to suffer hardship and teach the uneducated and show them the way to God as to remain here and have everything she needs”* (cf. PM.Ch. 5).

This exhortation of our Founder has become a reality in my life as a missionary in a faraway country America. My missionary journey began on 12 December 2018 as I travelled with Fr. Tom, the pastor and manager of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish and School, Page. When I was selected to go to the USA as a missionary, happily and willingly I gave my consent to my provincial. But after a few months, I suffered from facial palsy and everyone assumed I may not be able to go to the USA. Within a few weeks of treatment, I was fully cured by God's healing grace. God's ways are not mine; they are unpredictable and so different. I experienced His healing touch and I know that God has a purpose in my missionary life.

To be a teacher in America is really a challenging task. It's already 5 years that I am in Page, trying my very best to cope up with the standards of teaching the little ones under my care. Our founder was a man of prayer and always depended on God. In whatever problems I experiences, God's guiding hand is following me every day and my connection with my God is strengthened more through my prayer, reading the Word of God and spiritual books.

I am happy to share that although its challenging, I am happy to teach the small kids who are like little beautiful angels around me. Sometimes they are a great inspiration to me and they teach me the mystery of innocence and virtue of patience.



Sr. RAJESWARI PAIKHWAR

“I have called you by name you are mine” - Isaiah 3: 1

I am glad to share my missionary life of eight years in America. I was in Zuni for 5 years and in Page for 3 years. During this spiritual journey in an unknown land, I experienced the inner joy and happiness which God has blessed me with. To live in America as a missionary is truly a blessing but challenging. In every situation and in every hardship, I experienced Christ's love for me and his promise to be with me always, and this confidence enables me to embrace whatever comes on my way. My life of faith keeps me centred on God's help with a realization that I am not alone and Jesus us with me.

Teaching the American students is more challenging and at the same time exciting too. In both the schools I enjoyed teaching the little ones. I appreciate the people and my co-teachers and staff in particular for their respecting the dignity of every person. Among the many lay people, and parishioners we are called to be a witness to our consecrated life. Fr. Mathias Wolff says, *“My deepest desire is for you to become a dedicated religious, validating the vocation to which you have been called”* (January 4, 1827).

Under the guidance of our spiritual father Tom, four of us try to live the true spirit of JMJ thanking God and the Congregation for giving us the chance to experience God's unending love for us.

Let us be ever grateful to God for the gift of our vocation and say with our Founder, *“We cannot think of anything more generous and more divine than someone sacrificing his quiet and all interests for the salvation of mankind and the glory of God”* (PM I.33).

JMJ Zuni Mission among Native Americans

The three sisters of JMJ Community, Zuni in New Mexico state of the USA share their mission experiences working at St. Anthony Mission School, in Zuni reservation area where majority are native Americans.

My Life Experience in USA Mission



Sr. SAYTAGALLELA,
Zuni, New Mexico, USA

“My grace is sufficient for you” (2 Cor. 12:9), is a consoling verse for anyone. I discovered comfort in God’s assuring words also in Ps 23:4, *“Even when I walk through the dark valley, I fear no harm for you are at my side”*. I extracted courage from the aforementioned Biblical verses that brought me to America to render my humble service to God.

When I learned that every moment is a gift and blessing from God, I felt that my vocation to religious life was a priceless gift. God always gives us the best. It took me so long to discern and accept his plans and fortunately, He was patient with me and assisted me in my comprehension of His ways and plans. The words of Jesus, *“Do not fear; just have faith”* (Mk 5:36) enabled me to set aside all my fears and anxieties as a missionary in the USA.

My mission in Page, Arizona began in October 2014, when I said Yes in surrender, as my heart resonated with the comforting assurance of our Lord, *“Go into the whole world and proclaim the good news to the poor”* (Mark 6:15). Every experience in my mission has taught me to offer myself generously to God.

I served in Page from 2014 to 2021. Throughout my years at Page, I was blessed with so many opportunities to build good rapport with the students and their parents. The indigenous people are very good and are profoundly grateful for the presence of JMJ nuns and appreciate the impact that the sisters make on the kids and their community.

My firsthand experience at Page has taught me several new things for life. We toiled to spread the values of Gospel around and to get more admissions for the school. We organized potluck and Christmas play in 2016 for the first time with the expectation that it would be a great means of advertising for our school. The reputation of the school spread far and wide in Page

for its Catholic identity, discipline and standard. Ever since the school has been receiving enrollments in large numbers. I am profoundly grateful to God, and our Congregation for giving me this opportunity to render my service as a teacher in this place. I have great admiration and appreciation for Fr. Tom who guided me and taught me the local culture and the school task. As I ponder over my experience in Page mission, I am reminded of the words of our Founder, Rev. Fr. Mathias Wolff, *“One must be prepared to go wherever obedience requires this, even to America”* (PM.Ch.5). The dream of our founder in the 19th century has turned into a reality in the 21st century and has been accomplished by the love and dedication of our sisters.

I was exposed completely to a new culture when I was transferred to Zuni, New Mexico in July 2021. It’s an amazing experience to serve the people of Zuni who are native Indians, and deprived of qualitative education and employment. The people at Zuni are affluent in ancient cultural heritage. The people are economically poor, and most people live on government food stamp aid. About 70% of people are unemployed, so they migrate to cities for jobs. Children are brought up by the grandparents or guardians.

After 9 years of my service in the USA, I am well acquainted with the culture and customs and this helps me to be more effective in my ministry. Their simple lifestyle, hospitality and friendly nature recapped in me of the spirit of our Founder.

Although away from my native land, my mission in the USA continues to give me immense joy and I feel blessed from the bottom of my heart. I promise to continue to do my best in this mission and feel deeply moved by the trust that my sisters have placed in me. I pray that our founder’s vision be fulfilled through each one of us!

My Faith life as a Missionary at Zuni



Sr. RAGINI MARY ANTHONAPPA

Zuni, New Mexico state in the USA is where God has chosen and sent me to do His mission. I arrived in Zuni on July 27th 2022 along with Sr. Satya and Sr. Ansi, the members of my community. Flying for the first time was thrilling experience for me. The journey was smooth, looking out of the window the world seemed small.

I consider my life in Zuni as a special gift of God. I couldn't imagine that I will be a missionary one day in a foreign country leaving behind my motherland, my beloved ones, adjusting to a new culture, people, place, food habits, extreme cold weather etc. I was left totally anxious and confused but God whispered in my ears that *"Take courage, I will be with you always"*. With this assurance I said 'yes to the call' also remembered the words of our Founder to be ready to go anywhere even to America to do the will of God.

On the very first day as the students assembled in the Cafeteria on August 7th 2022, I was happy to see the kids most of them native Americans smiling, and going about joyfully. As I began to go to St. Anthony Mission School, without any prior knowledge of a new education system, I found it hard to meet the demands of new methods of teaching. I was given the responsibility to teach social studies and religion

to 6th, 7th and 8th graders. The teaching method is totally different from India, and it was difficult to teach the older ones, because they tease, laugh and even make fun of the teachers. Gradually, with an indomitable trust in God's providence and my positive inner disposition, soon I learned to fit into the system here. Slowly the students began to accept, and in a few months they became so friendly, affectionate and acknowledged saying you are our best teacher.

God's ways are not our ways. He guides and inspires, gives strength to handle tough situations with the wisdom. I believe that when God has chosen me to this mission, definitely He will take care of me. Besides teaching, we are actively involved in the pastoral work of the parish including Church activities, visiting the families and praying rosary with them.

My experience in Zuni has taught me many good things and I am grateful to God, to my General and Provincial Councils for choosing me to be a missionary. I could rejuvenate myself, experience a new culture, meet friendly individuals, listen to new dialects and appreciate people's hospitality. I feel that the entire time I spend here in Zuni is indeed a time of blessing, learning and renewing myself. I recount this memorable experience as I live these enchanting, grace filled days in Zuni.

Be aware that you cannot do the will of God better anywhere other than at the place to which you are being sent. (PM I.56)

Journey of Faith

*"The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases;
his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning; Great is your faithfulness."
- Lamentations 3:22-23*



Sr. ANSI ANTHONY SAMY

I kept reading and recollecting these bible verses from the day I stepped out of my house to join as an aspirant in Trichy in 1996. God's word became the beacon of light and life-giving inspiration in my difficult situation to move forward and follow Him passionately. All through my life I experienced God's goodness, guidance and support. Twenty-six years of my religious life is a joyful journey filled with challenges, difficulties and blessings. Missionary life is a call to faith. I realize it is not a call to live on a bed of roses or an easy religious life in the convent but it is a call to experience thorns along the way to bear fragrant roses to liberate others' lives. It's to travel in a less travelled path and make a difference in the lives of the people.

I believe that God who is everywhere is also with me. He sustains my life; He is the breath of my life that dwells in me and fulfills all things for His glory. I am certain that as a sister JMJ, I am an instrument of His love to render service in every possible way. As St. Paul expresses the difficulties on his missionary journey, I am not spared from challenges and condemnation. God's goodness and mercy will follow me all throughout my life and I will be His instrument of love and service.

The words of our founder Fr. Mathias Wolff: "A sister of JMJ should carry the four parts of world in her heart and be ready to go to America" and his motto: "I want to work like a giant to save as many souls as I can" kept resounding in my heart everyday motivating me to work hard, to take initiative to be at the service of the people, to love the people as my own and make use of every opportunity to serve the people of Zuni with great zeal and compassion both at St. Anthony Indian School and Parish Ministry.



Child Help Desk at Guntur Railway Station In the Service of Vulnerable Children

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord,
“plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give
you a hope and a future” -Jeremiah 29: 11*



Sr. GLORIA DANGWAR
Guntur Province

I feel greatly privileged to commit myself to be part in Jesus' redemptive mission through the Congregation of JMJ. Jesus said *“You did not choose me, but I chose you”* (Jn 15:16), yes, I am convinced that Jesus had chosen me from all eternity. With immense joy, I share my experience about the Railway Child Help Desk 1098 at Guntur railway station under JMJSSS, Nallapadu with an objective of reaching out to the vulnerable children in desperate circumstances.

The overall objective of this project is to identify children from the railway stations, provide them with shelter, and their basic needs and help them with legal aid and guidance, so as to enable them to readjust in their family and society.

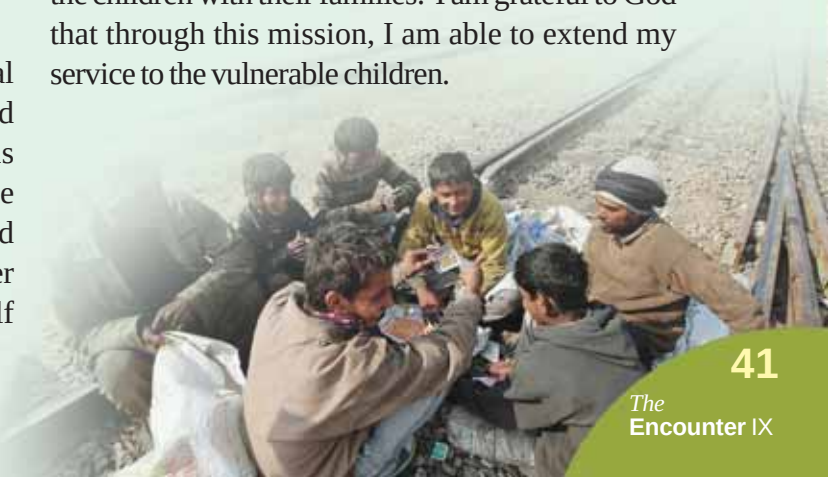
Railway Childline Activity: Our journey with railway Child Help Desk Guntur 1098 was started in the year 2021. This is the platform that reunites many broken and divided families through counselling and guidance. I am fortunate to work with the team as a counsellor to help the vulnerable children. I see them as people who have no hope to live. They are physically tortured, emotionally broken down and psychologically feel rejected by their family members and others.

The children run away from home due to several reasons like lack of love and care by the parents and many other issues. We, the team working in this helpline identify these types of children from the railway platforms and rescue them. The rescued children are given counselling and guidance as per their needs. We try our best, to build up their self

confidence and self-esteem through counselling sessions and help them to change their attitude towards life and bring significant positive changes in their behaviors.

Keeping our goals in mind, we collaborate our work with the Juvenile Justice Act (Care and Protection of Children), and Child Welfare Committee (CWC). So far, we have rescued 258 Children, and among them 168 are restored to their families, 36 are sent to Shelter homes and rest of them are transferred to other places safely.

Pope Francis said, *“I think of children who are victims of prostitution and human trafficking, who are humiliated in their essential human dignity”* It has been a great joy to me and a blessing to work with the railway child help desk, Guntur, which enabled me to understand the struggles and difficulties of children. In this endeavor, it is the children who have enriched me with their painful stories and taught me to care for them humbly in order to help to regain their human dignity. I am grateful to my Congregation and to the province for having given me this opportunity to work for the children who need our loving care and attention. I could experience the joy of reunion of the children with their families. I am grateful to God that through this mission, I am able to extend my service to the vulnerable children.



JMJ Mission cum JPIC Tidings, Roma



Sr. DENIN MARY

Mission cum JPIC Office, Rome

Laudato Si' Week 2023: We have celebrated the Laudato Si' Week, from 21 to 28 May 2023, with its theme "*Hope for the Earth. Hope for Humanity*," marking the eighth anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si'. This year we focused on disseminating the message from the film "*The Letter*", an extraordinary resource that allowed us to give visibility to the urgency of caring for our common home. This film was widely screened in our schools, colleges, health care facilities, as well to the beneficiaries, and members of the staff across all the Provinces and Region. The testimony of Arouna, Ridhima, Chief Dada, Greg and Robin, and their dialogue with Pope Francis, can be a great example for many in the struggle for a better world.

Laudato Si Animator's e-learning course from April to May 2023: Sr. Hrudaya Arogya Swamy participated in an online webinar for 6 weeks. The course module designed was a gathering of international participants, people from different walks of life, interacting and expressing their concern and love for nature, peace, and prevention of the global warming. This e-learning courses aimed at empowering the Laudato Si Animators to work with communities and families, children and youth, to consciously preserve the nature and promote justice and peace.

Catholic Care for Children International (CCCI) initiates a New Program: Under the umbrella of UISG, the CCCI has launched a program called '*Towards Family Solutions*' with a conviction that there is no substitute for a family care for children. An online basic course on '*Towards Family Solutions*' for the sisters and the lay people working in institutional settings (orphanages, boardings) was organised in July 2023. Sr. Joseph Mary, who is pursuing Licentiate in Safeguarding completed this course. From her internship experiences in India, through her encounters and interactions with children under institutional care, she gives strong evidence to the importance of family care for every child. It calls for a commitment to strengthen and build the supports needed for families and extended families to provide a nurturing environment for a healthy psycho-social development of children.

World Youth Day (WYD) 2023 from 29th July to 7th August 2023: For the first time the integral ecology is placed as a central agenda for formation and awareness of youth during the celebration of WYD 23. Sr. Joseph Mary and Sr. Denin participated as volunteers under Laudato Si' Movement with a specific task of interacting the youth and teaching them to care for Creation through Painting Campaign, Green Keepers and Stopping Human Trafficking. This



has offered us waves of goodness to carry out our service for the youth of today. WYD challenges the religious to ‘Accompany Youth’, and hence, it’s the responsibility of every JMJ sister to accompany the Youth in our campuses, and it’s also vital that the Congregation opts to take the youth ministry forward and considers it as an important apostolic priority.

JPIC Coordinators participate in the VIVAT (Latin word meaning *long live*) We attended an international workshop from 21st to 24th August 2023, and deepened our knowledge on VIVAT and how it operates and reflected on its theme, ‘*Creating a place in the world that is just and reconciled*’ – that focused on providing a dignified life for all creatures. Sr. Berlin Grace from Ghana shared her experiences and challenges in living the Gospel values with new perceptions and understanding of VIVAT in today’s world. Journeying together as people who want to be the voice for the voiceless, we looked at the following topics: History of JPIC and Social Teachings of the Catholic Church, Contemporary issues related to JPIC, Girl Child empowerment in Ghana, what is VIVAT and how VIVAT runs, how to report VIVAT activities and how to use the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) medium.

Further, Sr. Marykutty Antony and Sr. Susila Kerketta from Raipur province have attended the VIVAT International which works for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of United Nations (UN) in a Justice Coalition of Religious (JCoR) workshop at Jhabua, Madhya Pradesh from 16 to 17 September 2023. It was a workshop on “Human Rights Advocacy in relation to the Sustainable Developmental Goals.” which enlightened the participants on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDGs are modern secular gospel values and aim to transform our world. They are a call to action to end poverty, inequality, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy health, justice and prosperity. It is critical that no one is left behind.

A National Forum of Religious for Justice and Peace is organized at the Jubilee Memorial Animation Centre, Stanswamy Nagar, Vellayambalam, Trivandrum, Kerala, from 12 to 14 October 2023. The forum highlighted how the fundamentals of democracy are deliberately dismantled and the non-negotiable values enshrined in the Constitution of India, are systematically destroyed. The challenge was to read, understand and respond to the context with urgency and without counting the cost. The theme of our Workshop was Save Democracy Save Constitution. Together with us, several other collaborators from all over India have participated in this meaningful conference.

JMJ JPIC Europe has initiated to join Claretian religious family sharing from our personal budget a small contribution to distribute food packets to 100 migrants and refugees every month starting from October 2023. This initiation has created a space to be part of caring for the refugees and migrants, who enter into Italy in search of shelter, livelihood but unable to acquire because of the legal formalities. During the food distribution, a team from Vatican addresses the issues, through a monetary program designed for the timely support and care.

Participation in the JPIC Commission’s Working Groups: JMJ Membership every month in the working groups meetings on Anti Human Trafficking, Integrity of Creation, Refugees and Migrants helps me to contribute to the Justice and Peace initiatives in our Congregation, in the Church and society at large like marathon against atrocities and illegal mining, promotion of season of creation, Laudato Si’ initiatives and other related issues connected to JPIC.



RELIGIOUS SISTERS EXPRESS JOY AT “FULL PARTICIPATION” IN SYNOD

The President of the UISG said religious sisters have “responded with joy” to Pope Francis’ invitation to “the ecclesial journey of the Synod on Communion, Participation and Mission”.

Five religious women representatives: Sr. Mary Barron, OLA, the President of UISG; Sr. Patricia Murray, IBVM; UISG Executive Secretary, Sr. Elizabeth Mary Davis, RSM; Sr. Elysée Izerimana, Op. S.D.N. and Sr. Maria Nirmalini, A.C. representing the International Union of Superiors General (UISG) have participated at the first session of the Synod on Synodality, that was held in Rome from the 4th - 29th October 2023. The President of the UISG, Sister Mary Barron has expressed her joy at the opportunity to participate in the synod of synodality.

Gratefulness to Pope Francis

This year UISG has an additional reason for expressing its gratitude since it is the first time its representatives have participated as members in the Synodal process - engaging in the conversations in the Spirit, offering feedback to be included in written documentation, and in voting. In a separate declaration, Sr. Barron hoped that the UISG’s participation in the Synod will be to provide a prophetic voice since according to her “The UISG has heard the voices of its members who are eyewitnesses to so much of what is happening in our world today”.

The unique contribution of religious sisters

Sr Barron expressed confidence, that religious life, with its community life experience, can assist the Church in achieving this synodal conversion. Our consecrated life in all its forms already illustrates this synodal Church, where men and women of different generations and vocations joyfully collaborate in listening to each other and seeking God’s will, to build together a Church that God awaits in this third millennium. We too, as the consecrated religious of our day, have much to learn from others within the



Church, so we too continue the path of conversion, improving and developing synodality within consecrated life and beyond, she affirmed.

She also noted that we are invited to feel part of this Synod, to share our experiences and to dream together so that the Synodal Church becomes a reality. We take part in this adventure with confidence, remaining humble and co-responsible!

The UISG press release concluded that through the Synod responses we received, and through the synthesis we ourselves contributed to in collaboration with our male counterpart, the Union of Superiors General (USG), we feel we can confidently represent this important aspect of ecclesial life that touches so many people.

Read: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2023-09/religious-sisters>

What is Conversation in the SPIRIT



“Conversation in the Spirit” is the approach taken by the Synodal Assembly in Rome, gathering over 450 participants from all continents to listen to one another and hear what the Holy Spirit has to say to them over the course of an entire month spent together in prayer, reflection, and sharing.

The *“Conversation in the Spirit,”* as a method proposes a spiritual journey alternating moments of *silence, prayer* and *listening*, with moments of dialogue and identification of the “steps” that *“the Spirit”* is calling us to take together.

In every meeting, we invite the *Holy Spirit* into our conversations; ground our conversations in God. Having conversations in the Spirit opens up a space for us, a spiritual atmosphere to breathe in deeply, where true discernment can unfold so that we can move forward together.

It’s a practice of inviting the Holy Spirit into our conversations, so that He can unite us amidst our differences and diversity, helping us move from “I” to “we” – not to erase our uniqueness but to bring us together in the harmony of being brothers and sisters in Christ at the service of others.

By personally experiencing conversations in the Spirit, the hope is that participants will be able to reflect with greater insight on how God is calling the Congregation and the Church in today’s world to be more capable

of listening, discerning the needs of our times, and acting accordingly in the light of the Gospel.

The *“Conversation in the Spirit,”* can be especially helpful when there is a decision to be made, for which we need God’s guidance. Conversations in the Spirit can also be immensely helpful when we are facing a conflict or disagreement. God can help bring us up over the impasse, opening up a new way forward where we thought it wasn’t possible.

Conversations in the Spirit start with a specific question that we would like to discern about. For example, how can our Community/ Province/Region or parish be more missionary? Or as a Congregation, how do we create more missionary zeal or unity of purpose among our sisters? Once we have our question for discernment, here are some basic steps for having a conversation in the Spirit.

The 5 steps in the Conversation in the Spirit:
The method of the Conversation in the Spirit outlines four stages and four moments of prayer.

1. First step begins with a *“personal preparation”* in prayer with the Holy Spirit to meditate on one’s contribution on the issue being discerned. Entrust the conversation to God, and reflect in prayer on the question for discernment.
2. Second, begins with a moment of silence, prayer, and includes listening to the Word of God together.

Choose a passage from Scripture that is fitting for the question at hand. Pray together, sing together. Be united in God. Speak with Jesus about the question at hand. Ask God to guide you and the whole group to follow His will.

3. Third, at a table or in a circle, guided by the Holy Spirit, each person then has the opportunity to share what God has been saying and what has resonated most to him or her about the question being discerned. During this first round of sharing, each person has his or her own turn to speak without being interrupted by any other member of the group and above all everyone listens attentively to other. Then there is a moment of silence, so that what others have said can resonate with us. This initial exchange is followed by a time of prayer and silence.

4. Fourth, we go around the circle again, and each person has the opportunity to briefly respond to what struck him or her about what others shared in the first round. Each person could answer the question “*when listening, did my heart burn within me?*” Then there is a time of silence again, to listen in our hearts to what has been shared in this second round.

5. Fifth, the last stage of the *Conversation in the Spirit* is a free exchange among participants, dialoguing with one another on the basis of what has

emerged in order to discern and gather together the fruit of the *Conversation in the Spirit* that has just taken place. We recognize points of commonality between us, as well as differences between us. We try and hear what the Holy Spirit is saying to us as a group, so that we can move forward in a common direction. We ask ourselves: “*What steps is the Holy Spirit calling us to take together?*” And finally, we conclude with a prayer or song of thanksgiving to God.

After “*Conversation in the Spirit*,” all working groups share their reports with one another in a plenary session with “*an open space for interventions by participants*.” According to an infographic, each individual group then writes a report on the fruits of the open dialogue in the plenary session, along with proposals for further steps.

*Holy Spirit, come and ground
our conversations in You,
so that we can discern the path
ahead and move forward
as a Congregation set on fire. Amen.*

Reference

‘Conversation in the Spirit’ at 2023 Synod on Synodality

<https://catholicvote.org/conversation-in-the-spirit-at-2023-synod-on-synodality/>



The conversation in the Spirit

A dynamic of discernment in the synodal Church



Silence, prayer and listening
to the Word of God

PERSONAL PREPARATION

By entrusting oneself to the Father, conversing in prayer with the Lord Jesus and listening to the Holy Spirit, each one prepares his or her own contribution to the question about which he or she is called to discern.

«Taking the word and listening»

Each person takes turns speaking from his or her own experience and prayer, and listens carefully to the contribution of others.



Silence and
Prayer



«Making space for others and the Other»

From what the others have said, each one shares what has resonated most with him or her or what has aroused the most resistance in him or her, allowing himself or herself to be guided by the Holy Spirit: "When, listening, did my heart burn within me?"

Silence and
Prayer

«Building together»

Together we dialogue on the basis of what emerged earlier in order to discern and gather the fruit of the conversation in the Spirit: to recognize intuitions and convergences; to identify discordances, obstacles and new questions; to allow prophetic voices to emerge.

It is important that everyone can feel represented by the outcome of the work.

"To what steps is the Holy Spirit calling us together?"



Final prayer of thanksgiving



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GUNTUR PROVINCE



HYDERABAD PROVINCE



GHANA REGION



RAIPUR PROVINCE



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